

THE
PORTRAIT OF LIFE,
OR
THE VARIOUS EFFECTS
OF
VIRTUE AND VICE
DELINEATED;

As they daily appear on the great Theatre of the World.

IN A COLLECTION OF
INTERESTING NOVELS.
IN TWO VOLUMES.

Let us (since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die)
Expatriate free o'er all this scene of man;
A mighty maze, but not without a plan—
Eye nature's walks; shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise.

POPE.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

L O N D O N:

Printed for *John Bell*, at his Circulating Library near
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at York.

M. DCC. LXX.

THE
PORTAL OF LIFE
OR
THE VARIOUS EFFECTS
OF
THE
VITAE
AND
THE
MORALITY
OF
THE
HUMAN
MIND
AND
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OF
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AND
THE
MORALITY
OF
THE
HUMAN
MIND



VOLUME THE SECOND
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C O N T E N T S

O F T H E

S E C O N D V O L U M E.

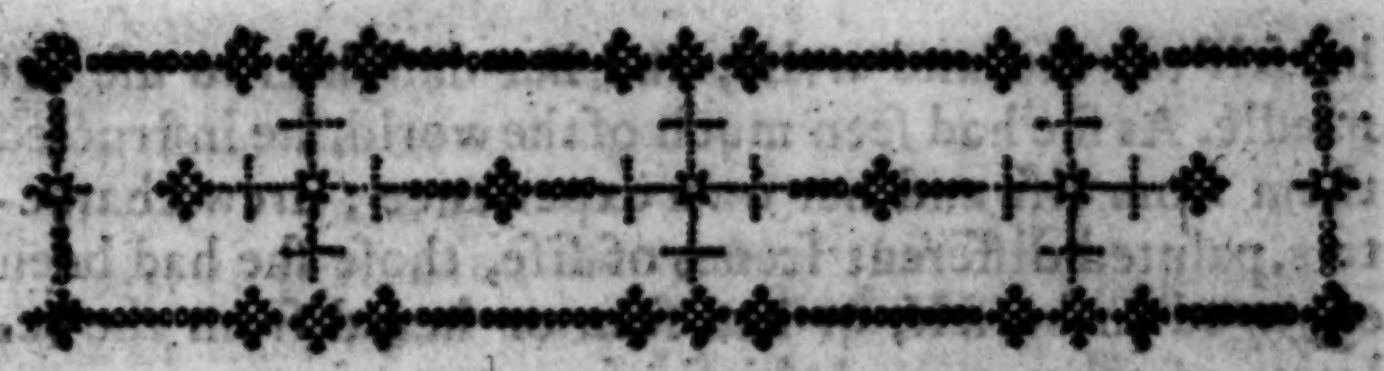
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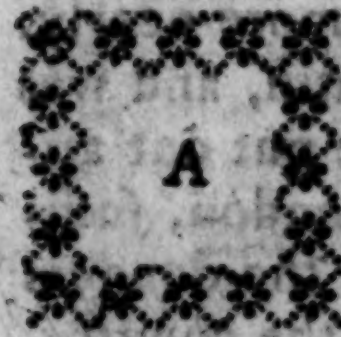
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Interesting Novels.



VIR TUE IN D I S T R E S S.



A DECENT and discreet widow was left by her husband, (a gentleman of a small estate but fine accomplishments,) in moderate circumstances, with the care of two sons and an only daughter, all under age. To give them a good education was her chief business and delight. In all other respects she was thrifty, and even parsimonious; but, in this, she was what the generality would, perhaps, call profuse; for she esteemed a good education the best and most lasting patrimony. Accordingly, she was at pains to introduce them into the best company, and to teach them all those accomplishments, which it would be unbecoming the character of a gentleman or Lady to be ignorant of. She taught both her sons

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herself to read and write, and her daughter to use her needle. As she had seen much of the world, she instructed them from life and her own experience ; drew characters, painted different scenes of life, those she had been engaged in herself, or had seen or heard from the relation of others ; and this in so entertaining a manner, that the young creatures were all ear, and, as Shakespear says, their 'spirits would fly out into her stories.' She made each of them, in their turns, to read to the others, and all of them to give their sentiments afterwards ; opening their tender conceptions by the familiar and easy questions she put to them. At other times, she set them to writing letters to one another, and after they had made a visit, or other excursion from home, she drew out their little observations on all they had seen or heard : but, what was of most advantage to them, she went before them in every virtue, and was a strict pattern of that decency and prudent conduct which she recommended. After this sober education at home, she sent her daughter to one of the genteelest boarding schools, and often went thither herself to inspect her manners more nearly. Her eldest son, after he had learned his Latin, and was master of figures and book-keeping, she put out apprentice to a considerable merchant in London, sufficiently guarded, as she thought, against the dangers of the town, by his virtuous education in the country. He did very well for some time, and was much beloved by his master, both for his diligence and honesty : but he was 'ere long decoyed into an intrigue, by an handsome maid of the family, who, with an artifice peculiar to some of those town-bred girls, affected to be in love with him. She endeavoured to convince him of it, by giving a particular attention to all his wants, and expressing a tender concern to please him. She played her cajoling arts with such success

success upon his honest credulity and simplicity, that she soon gained her point, and wrought him up to the real passion which she only feigned. This made him neglect his business, and fall into gaming, to supply the real or pretended wants of his mistress. The effects of their adventure, in a short time, became visible; and partly shame, partly her persuasions, obliged him to leave a family, where his credit was ruined, and his conduct liable to frequent censure. His mistress followed him, and became the companion, as she had been the cause of his misery. He now set up for himself, and, having drawn away the rest of his patrimony, drove a little retailing trade: but as the slow returns did not satisfy the growing demands of his mistress, business soon became a drudgery to him; and he had recourse to drinking, to drown all reflections on his circumstances and conduct, and stifle those sentiments of honour and virtue, which now and then stung him with deep remorse. In this course he soon exhausted the rest of his stock, plunged himself in debt, was cast into gaol, and must have laid there, if his disconsolate mother, whose heart bled to hear of his misfortunes, had not streightened her own and her family's circumstances, to relieve him. After he got out of prison, where he was abandoned by his mercenary mistress, who, foreseeing his fate, had run away with the remainder of his money and effects, he passed through a new variety of misfortunes: in short, the result was, he went abroad, and listed himself in the late Emperor's service in Italy.

The other son, whom I shall call Eubulus, had fine natural parts, joined to an uncommon sweetness of temper, and an affability that endeared him to every body. He went to the university, where, by his indefatigable application to his studies, he made great proficiency in learning, and, by his conversation and

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polite manners, gained the favour of his superiors, and the esteem of all who knew him. His company was courted by those of the best rank, but especially by all true lovers of learning and virtue. Among others, he contracted a particular intimacy with a young gentleman of a large fortune, and a mind still larger, who chose him to be his companion rather than tutor in his travels. This proposal, how advantageous soever, he would not accept, till he should consult with his mother and sister, both whom he loved with an uncommon tenderness. Their consent being obtained, he went to take his leave of them; the parting was tender on both sides: 'My dear Eubulus, said the good woman, taking him by the hand, with her eyes full, you are going a long journey. I fear I shall never see you again; your poor brother's misfortunes have shortened my days, and your absence cannot lengthen them:—but, since I hope it is for your advantage, I cheerfully submit. To almighty God I commit you. Pray spare no pains to learn some news of your unfortunate brother;—if you find him out, give him my last blessing, and tell him I shall die in peace, if I hear that he is reformed and happy.'—She could not proceed; her sighs and tears were the only farther expressions of her inward grief. He then bid his sister farewell. Her last words were: 'Oh, Eubulus! remember our poor dear brother,—find him out, if he be still living, and tell him (Oh, do not forget it!) that our dearest mother and I want nothing, to compleat our happiness, but to hear that he is, what he once was, the same virtuous—' She could say no more; her heart was oppressed with sorrow at the tender parting, and that heightened by sad reflections upon the ill courses of her elder brother, and the melancholy forebodings she had, that her mother would not long survive.

Soon—

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Soon after, he and his friend (whom I shall call Agathias) went abroad, and did not, like most of our raw young travellers, only traverse provinces, gape after wonders and curiosities, and throw away their time in gallantry; they staid long enough, in places of note, to get acquainted with the most eminent men for capacity and learning, who are generally the most easy of access to ingenious strangers; and to learn whatever was most curious and worthy their notice. In their progress through Italy, their curiosity led them to Venice, in the time of the carnival; they were spectators rather than actors in the diversions of it. One evening, as Eubulus was returning home alone, he saw two fellows, in masks, attacking a single gentleman, who made a stout resistance, but was pressed to the wall, and seemed reduced to the last extremity. Eubulus immediately drew in defence of the single combatant, and obliged the villains to retire, after they were deeply wounded. He led the gentleman to his own lodgings, and sent immediately for a surgeon to dress his wounds. When the stranger's mask was taken off, how was he surprized to see his friend Agathias, whom he had rescued from such imminent danger; and how overjoyed was Agathias to find the friend and deliverer united in the same person! When he was going to make his acknowledgments for his generous succour, Eubulus begged him to spare them, till he should be in a better condition to make them. The wounds were found not mortal, so that in a few weeks he recovered. While they continued there, they had a message from an unknown lady, who desired to communicate to them an affair of importance. Though they were both averse to go, yet they knew so well the vindictive humour of the Italians, that they were afraid to give the lady a denial. Accordingly, they waited on her; when she told them, she believed

B. 3.

they

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they were surpris'd at receiving a message from one who was so much a stranger to them; but, as she well knew the humanity of the English, especially to their countrymen, and had heard that two gentlemen of that nation lived in her neighbourhood, she thought she could not do them a greater pleasure, than by giving them an opportunity of doing a very important service to one of their own country, a very worthy gentleman, who had been clapped up in prison, by an order of the Doge, for no other crime but his being of her acquaintance. If, continued she, you have the honour, gentlemen, to know any of the foreign ambassadors, you will find it no hard matter, by employing your interest with them, to obtain his release; and, at the same time, you will do me a singular pleasure.

The gentlemen endeavoured to excuse themselves in the politest manner they could, alledging they were strangers in the town; but, in effect, they had no mind to meddle in an affair, which seemed, by the lady's interesting herself so warmly in it, to wear the face of an intrigue. She continued to urge them with great eagerness, and asked, if they had no acquaintance with the French ambassador. Agathias was a man of too much honour to deny, that he had some small acquaintance with him, but said he did not know whether it could be of any use to her friend; he promised, however, to try how far it would go. They immediately waited on Monsieur de —, the French ambassador, and informed him of the whole affair; who smiled, and politely promised his friendship. Accordingly he applied to the Doge, and all the favour he could obtain was a promise of the gentleman's release, upon paying a fine of a thousand crowns, and giving security for his future good behaviour. Soon after, prompted by their curiosity, they
asked

asked and obtained leave to visit the prisoner under his confinement. They found him in a wretched condition: his looks pale and meagre, and his eyes hollow, the very image of death; his face was marked with the deepest dejection and anguish. Upon putting a few questions to him about the time of his leaving England, and his employment since as well as before, Eubulus faintly recollected some of his features; upon which, he asked him if he was any relation of —, who had been some time a widow. At the mention of her name, the stranger fetched a deep sigh, and said he had been once son to that dear woman, but, alas! he had forfeited his title to that relation. Eubulus could hold no longer; he fell upon his neck, wept over him, and continued for some time speechless. Agathias, deeply penetrated with this dumb but expressive scene, mixed his friendly tears with their's. At length, words got vent: Oh! Pamphilus, have I at last found you out; you, whom your dearest mother, sister, and I, gave over for lost!—But, ah! how changed!—And in what deplorable circumstances!—Where have you been?—How came you hither? Heaven, I hope, sent us to your relief—

Pamphilus, with a mixture of dejection, astonishment, and joy, asked how he had learned his misfortune; and what had induced him, and the gentleman with him, to visit him in his present situation; adding, that his misfortunes would be too tedious to relate. His brother soon satisfied his questions, and told him he might safely open his mind before the gentleman, whose goodness prompted him to pay him so kind a visit. Being thus assured, he frankly confessed, that the lady they mentioned had entertained him since he came to Venice; whither he was allowed to come, by his General Officer, to see the diver-

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sions of the carnival, having been for some time in the Emperor's service ;—and that he had been put under arrest, at the request of some noble relations of the lady's, who were displeased at his intimacy with her, and now he was daily expecting some miserable fate, as a punishment for his past imprudence. He then cast down his eyes with a mournful air. Agathias, whose eyes and heart had been fastened upon the two brothers, turning to the elder, in a generous kind of transport, said,

I am glad, Sir, that, in finding a brother, you have likewise found a deliverer. You are released upon paying a thousand crowns, which I will freely advance for your brother's sake. Pamphilus would have cast himself at his feet, to express the raptures he felt; but Agathias took him in his arms, and told him he was glad to embrace the brother of his friend and deliverer; he gave him, withal, a short account how he had saved his life. The fine was paid, and Pamphilus released. He assured them upon his honour, that, after paying his acknowledgments to his benefactress, he would break off all correspondence with her, and immediately return to the army.

While they continued at Venice, a letter came by way of Genoa to Eubulus, from his sister Eliza, to this effect :

My dear Brother,

What shall I tell you? How will you be able to bear the fatal news of the death of our much honoured and dearest mother, whose loss is to me more bitter than death, and will plunge you, I fear, into the deepest sorrow? But the other night she called me to her bed-side, and, taking me by the hand, said, ' My dear child, I am just going to leave you. A few hours will bear me to the world of spirits. I willingly resign
you,

VIRTUE IN DISTRESS. 9

you, my dear charge, and your brothers, if they are yet alive, to the care of a good God, who will always befriend the virtuous. I rejoice you are of that number. If you continue as you have set out, you cannot fail of being happy. When you have an opportunity to write to your brothers, or shall see them, tell them I died with them on my heart, left them a mother's blessing, and had no higher wish on earth than to hear they were wise and good. Alas! poor Pamphilus, would to God he were so; were I sure of this, I should die perfectly easy. I hope Eubulus will return to you, and heaven make you happy in each other. Farewel, my dearest child! May heaven preserve you wise and good; and, when you drop a tear to the memory of a loving mother, be excited thereby to imitate whatever you thought good in her. Oh! Farewel!—

With these words the dear woman resigned her soul into her Maker's hands, and smiled in the agony of death. Oh! my dear brother, grief overwhelms me; I can add no more, but that I long exceedingly to see you; that will be my only cordial, to alleviate the heavy loss of your affectionate sister,

E L I Z A.

This mournful news cut Eubulus to the heart. He grew impatient to return home: he hoped his presence might help to lighten his sister's grief. Agathias, perceiving his friend's uneasiness, inclined to indulge him by hastening his return. They took Milan in their way home, where they found Pamphilus, much reclaimed by his misfortunes. Eubulus informed him of their mother's death, the tender circumstances of his parting from her and their sister, the deep affection they both bore him, and particularly the concern she expressed about him in her last moments. The recital of these, and the sight of his sister's moving letter,

letter, made such an impression on him, that they left him strongly confirmed in his virtuous resolutions.

Eliza, after her mother's death, lived retired from the world : she kept company only with a few select friends. It was a sweet retreat where she lived ; there was a pretty garden and farm belonging to it, the small remainder of the family estate. At the foot of the garden runs a clear brook, cloathed on each side with little tufts of wood, and bushes growing wildly up and down. This stream, after watering the farm, loses itself in a neighbouring wood. She dressed plain and clean, and was not distinguished from the farmer's daughters in the neighbourhood, but by a superior openness and dignity in her air and manner ; which appeared under all the homeliness of her dress. Her time was generally divided between the œconomy of her family, and the management of the farm. Reading, visiting the sick, and doing kind offices to all about her. Her knowledge of simples qualified her to be useful to her neighbours in most ordinary illnesses ; and a frugal well-judged management of her small revenue put it in her power frequently to reach out her friendly hand to the assistance of the indigent, whom she used to employ in different kinds of manufacture ; and at the same time that she relieved their wants, she encouraged their industry ; so that her house was a little sanctuary to the painful poor ; it was always open to them, and the beneficent mistress of it at all times accessible. Her servants almost adored her ; and her amiable and wise deportment rendered her equally the delight and admiration of the whole neighbourhood. She was fair and blooming, and of a shape exquisitely proportioned. There was an uncommon gracefulness in her mien, and sprightliness in her air and looks, mixed with such a peculiar

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peculiar sweetness, as discovered the kind and humane temper of her soul. In this manner did this innocent and virtuous maid pass her time, when it pleased heaven to interrupt, for a while, the calm she enjoyed, and put her virtues to a new and severe trial.

A gentleman, who had lived at no great distance, was lately returned from his travels; struck with the high and very singular character he had of her, he contrived this stratagem to see her: It was Eliza's ordinary custom to walk out every morning and evening round the farm, and along the banks of the little rivulet that watered it, and often with a book in her hand. Sometimes she would lay herself down by this stream, and with a delighted mind enjoy those simple and unvarnished pleasures, which virtue, joined with contemplation, never fails to give in those rural scenes, neither envying nor railing at the pleasures and amusements of gayer life. One evening, as Eliza was taking her usual walk, this curious gentleman, having got near the place, dismounted from his horse, and cast himself on the ground, as if he had been seized with a sudden illness. Eliza, overhearing a faint sound, not unlike the groans of a person in distress, immediately gave way to the suggestions of her compassionate breast; she rose, and went to the place where the gentleman, whom I shall call Lothario, was lying on the ground. No sooner did she learn his misfortune, than she ran home to call for assistance, and soon returned with some of her servants. Finding him to appearance in great agonies, they carried him to the house, where she made him an offer of an outer apartment, till he should be a little recovered. He thanked her kindly for her generous hospitality, and told her that he hoped to be well with a night's rest. Her person, conversation, and whole behaviour charmed

charmed him beyond expression ; but that modesty which appeared so unaffectedly graceful, and that kind concern she shewed for his health, which ought to have extinguished every ungenerous sentiment, served only to inflame a criminal passion. At first he only expressed the warmest acknowledgements of her generosity : he took advantage after of the tenderness of her concern for his illness.—He grew bolder---professed love in the strongest terms---and began to use such familiarities in his discourse as were too shocking for a modest ear. This roused Eliza's nobler passions ; and, with eyes flashing a generous disdain and indignation, she said to Lothario, ' Presumptuous man ! though I cannot blame myself for doing an act of hospitality to a stranger, yet I am sorry it has happened to be so ill placed on an ungenerous man, who dares to abuse it in so ungentleman-like a manner. I thought my own house would have been a sufficient protection to me against all indecency, especially from you ; but, since it is not, you are now at liberty to go where you please.'---She then quitted the room with an emotion she could not conceal. Before he departed, he desired to see and take leave of his benefactress ; but she would not permit him : so he rode off unattended and unobserved. He was not a little vexed at his disappointment ; and the repulse he had met with, instead of discouraging, redoubled his passion. Allured therefore by so fair a prey, he thought of various stratagems to get her in his power ; and resolved to use force, if she would not yield to persuasion.

He lay in ambush for her one day, in the wood I formerly mentioned, adjoining to the house. Eliza happened to wander farther off than usual ; and, being intercepted by his servants, Lothario carried her off, in spite of all her cries and struggles. He stopped

ped not, day or night, till he had brought her to a very private country-seat of his, where he kept but few servants, to which he used sometimes to retire, when he desired to have little communication with his neighbours. It was a double affliction to poor Eliza, when she knew that Lothario was the author of it. Finding however that she was entirely in his power, she forbore those bitter invectives and useless exclamations which many of her sex would have indulged on so just an occasion, and trusted that heaven would send her some speedy succour. To alleviate her grief and resentment, which he saw swell high, he told her it was nothing but an excess of the most tender passion for her that had forced him to this extremity—that she might expect such usage as was suited to her merit and character, and might command his house and all in it; for he was absolutely at her devotion. She deigned no other reply but what he might draw from looks, which darted the utmost aversion and contempt. He allowed her indeed all manner of liberty in this prison; permitted her to walk or ride out as she chose, though never out of the reach of attendants. But she made no attempts of that kind, in order to lull them in the deeper security; and after some time, affected an air of frankness and easiness, to which she was quite a stranger.

Lothario, in the mean while, left no arts of insinuation and flattery untried, to win her consent to his designs: he made her an offer of a considerable settlement for life, and of a handsome provision for her brother. She still kept him at bay; but he began to conceive some better hopes from her more softened appearance, and did not doubt to gain his point, when he had melted her by his suppliant importunities and protestations of love. It would be tedious to relate the methods he tried, during the course of
some

some months: he did not indeed come to direct force, though he would sometimes break into her apartment, and talk to her in a manner that highly provoked her; but she endeavoured to conceal her resentment. One morning, when Lothario was from home, she got up much earlier than her usual hour, and, having stole a key of the garden, slipped out unperceived by any of the servants. After she had crossed the garden, she leapt from the sunk fence, and with difficulty scrambled up the opposite side of the ditch. She passed over several fields, forcing her way through the hedges. Fear added wings to her speed. She went on till she thought herself out of danger, and then she sat down by the side of a hedge, quite tired with fatigue and want of sleep. She now began to think over the dangers she had run, the trials and insults she had borne---the greater ones she had feared; but especially the dreadful suspense she was in about what might still befall her. All these things came crowding into her thoughts, and filled her with a variety of strong emotions. She looked up to heaven for relief, and committed herself and the success of her escape to providence. Nature being at length overcharged and quite spent, she sunk into sleep on the green turf.

It happened, that a company of gentlemen were out that morning a fox-hunting. The chase had been long, and one of the party being thrown out, chanced to come to the place where Eliza lay. He started at the sight of a lady fast asleep, and loosely dressed, with her face and arms strangely scratched, and the blood drawn in many places. But, amidst all the disorder of her dress and looks, he was struck with the amiableness of her appearance, and fineness of her shape, which spoke strongly in her favour, and confuted, in some measure, the disadvantageous circumstances in which

which he saw her. He stood for some time gazing at her with pleasure and astonishment, and was afraid to awake her. But how much more was Eliza alarmed, when she opened her eyes upon a gentleman in a hunting-dress, gazing at her, with his horse in his hand! Ashamed to be surprised in such disorder, she started up on her feet: her first thought was to have run off directly, without speaking a word; but thinking it vain to fly from one, in whose power she was, or to betray an insignificant distrust, she chose rather to try his generosity. She said, she doubted not but he was a little surprised at finding a woman in that place, and in such an odd condition; but begged he would suspend his wonder, till she had an opportunity of informing him more particularly of the occasion;—that just then she could only tell him, that an extraordinary accident had brought her into those circumstances;—and, as he had the appearance of a gentleman, she did not doubt but he had the honour of one. She should therefore put herself under his protection, and begged that he would conduct her to some place of safety. He told her that he would most cheerfully undertake so agreeable a charge;—that a lady of his acquaintance lived hard by, to whose house he would conduct her, where she might be sure of a hearty welcome, and to be treated with that honour she appeared to deserve, till she was recovered of her fatigue, and in a condition to remove elsewhere. His open countenance and gentleman-like mien gave her some degree of confidence in him, though unknown; and, should she be deceived, she did not see how she could secure a civil usage, by any means so effectual, as by expressing an intire trust in her protector. She frankly accepted his offer, and returned him thanks in so graceful a manner, that made him think himself the debtor. By this time some of the servants

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servants came up. He ordered one of them to take the lady up behind him, and conducted her himself directly to his mother's, who lived at her jointure-house, but a few miles off. There, Eliza found herself among a very different set of people from those she had met with at Lothario's, and was entertained in quite another manner. The gentleman informed his mother of the distress he found the lady in, and desired she would lend her friendly aid to recover her of the fright and fatigue she had undergone. The ladies, like two kindred souls, soon distinguished each other, and no sooner saw, than they esteemed; at least, formed the most agreeable ideas the one of the other.

Eliza being left in good hands, the young gentleman took his leave, and returned to his own house, full of the image of the lovely stranger, whose aspect and whole behaviour raised in him high admiration and delight. He imagined to himself a thousand excellencies concealed under so fair a form, and a demeanour so singularly graceful. He was no sooner at home, than, rushing into a friend's apartment who lodged with him, he immediately told him his uncommon adventure; expatiated much on the charms and outward accomplishments of the distressed stranger, and added, that, if her character and merit corresponded to such fair appearances, he thought her a treasure worth purchasing at any rate. He was not a little impatient till he returned next day to see her, and inquire after her health. But how troubled and confounded was he, when he heard that Eliza was seized with a fever! It was, however, of the slightest kind, and, when it went off, she appeared to him with new charms. She had now recovered her natural looks, and, though paler than usual, yet that paleness had something so languishing and soft in it, and so different

different from that over-heated flush which a conflict of various passions had given her, that the young gentleman was quite in raptures. Eliza renewed her acknowledgements to him for his generous deliverance and protection of her, freely confessed she had at first some suspicion and distrust of him, having had so late a proof of the falshood and treachery of the sex; but she was now convinced, by his means, that men were not all alike. He thanked her for the compliment she made him, and told her, he was repaid for what he had done, by the satisfaction she expressed with his conduct, and the pleasure he felt in having contributed to the ease and safety of so deserving a lady; and desired she would condescend to inform him of her misfortune. 'You have a right, Sir, (answered Eliza) to know my story, and it is fit I should remove any suspicions which my being found in such unfavourable circumstances may have raised.'---Upon hearing her story, her solitary condition and way of life before she was carried off, and particularly the account of her family and relations, how much was he surprised and delighted to find the young lady the sister of his friend and fellow-traveller Eubulus, who had returned with him not above a month before! Joy flowed so full upon him, that Agathias was going to have taken Eliza in his arms, and to have made a full discovery. But he checked himself, and only congratulated her upon her happy escape; and he made no doubt but that, as heaven had already appeared very seasonably for her relief, it would at last crown her virtue with a happiness proportioned to it. Upon this, he left her.

When Agathias and Eubulus returned from their travels, Eubulus was extremely troubled to find the mansion-house desolate, and his dear sister, his chief joy of life, gone, and nobody could tell whither.

Agathias

18 VIRTUE IN DISTRESS.

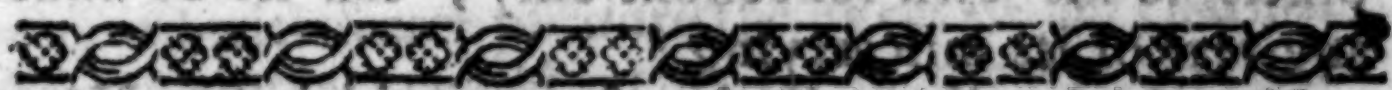
Agathias told Eubulus, (who had been mostly with him since his return, not being able to bear the solitude of his own house, where every apartment and field recalled some mournful image of his heavy loss;) that the lady's conversation and manners justified, and even increased the high esteem he had conceived for her. And, added he, with a kind of transport of joy, you yourself, Eubulus, shall judge to-morrow, whether I have been hasty in my opinion.

Next day, he took Eubulus with him, to see the unfortunate stranger. The mother of Agathias had concerted it with her son, not to reveal any thing to either of them; and only prepared Eliza thus far, as to tell her, she was to introduce to her a particular friend of her son.—As Eubulus had been several years abroad, both his and his sister's looks were pretty much alter'd. He could not, however, help feeling some strange sympathies at his first seeing her, which he did not know, nor indeed, endeavour to account for. Eliza's concern was reciprocal, and she was observed to steal several attentive glances at him, which drew some blushes from her, which she perceived were taken notice of. Agathias, in the meanwhile, and his mother, were greatly delighted with those kindlings of mutual sympathy, and a growing tenderness which they saw flashing, like harmless lightning, from eye to eye. In the afternoon, they led them into the garden, where, in a retired arbour, Agathias's mother begged of Eliza to entertain them with an account of her story, and the late accident; for perhaps, added she, the stranger we have introduced to you is more interested in your fortunes than you are aware of. Eliza would have gladly declined the task, but, as she could not refuse her benefactress so small a boon, she, with modest, downcast eyes, begun her story from the time of her first acquaintance

quaintance with Lothario, and told what had befallen her since, till her fortunate meeting with Agathias, her generous deliverer. She told her story so gracefully, represented the villainy of Lothario in such soft terms, and passed over her own behaviour with such a modest bashfulness and humility, as wonderfully moved and charmed Agathias and his mother. Eubulus felt an uncommon tenderness, mixed with admiration; the tears started into his eyes. Madam, said he, give me leave to ask your name and family? Alas! sir, she replied, you desire me to renew my grief. But that part of my story is short: my parents are both dead, my dear mother last. I had once two brothers, they went abroad several years ago, but whether they are dead or alive, I have not lately heard. One of them had been very unhappy; with the other, I had formed a tender and inviolable friendship; he is now upon his travels with a gentleman of fortune and great merit. I wish for nothing to repair the loss of the best of mothers, and make me completely happy, but to see him again. If my dear Eubulus be still alive, and it please heaven to restore him to my sight, O how happy—She could proceed no farther; sighs denied a passage to her words. Eubulus, whose mind had been all along shaken with a thousand emotions of tenderness and passion, could contain no longer. He started from his seat, and ran to her in the tenderest transports, and clasping her in his arms, burst out, Then, my dearest sister, be as happy as your virtue——Words failed him to say more; a flood of tears succeeded, the effect of inexpressible delight. This unexpected recovery of her brother raised in Eliza's breast such a conflict of agreeable passions, that she continued some time speechless. Nor were Agathias and his mother less melted with so tender a scene. Eliza, having at length

length given vent to the joy which overpowered her, in a liberal flood of tears, broke out : O, my dearest Eubulus, my brother ! Is it you ? Am I, indeed, so happy as to see you again ? Has heaven restored you to me to part no more ? Behold there, in the son of my benefactress, my deliverer and guardian, to whom I owe more than life, my honour, and my all ! You must acknowledge the immense debt I owe him ; I have an heart to feel, but want words to express it. O, Madam, replied Agathias, your brother and my friend, as well as fellow-traveller, has already paid me more substantially than by words. To his bravery I owe my life, which heaven has prolonged to give me an opportunity of preserving what is infinitely dearer to me. I am more than sufficiently rewarded, in the pleasure of having contributed to the ease of one so deserving in herself, and so dear to him. If you, Madam, think there is any thing owing, it is you only who can pay it. It is yourself I ask, as the full reward. To possess such a treasure is all I wish to crown my happiness. My fortune is not equal to your merit, but it will be more than enough, if I can share it with you. — The high generosity of such a proposal so surprised and confounded Eliza, that she could make no reply, but her silent blushes signified her consent, with a modest and expressive eloquence, transcending all the pomp of words. The match was concluded in a few days, with the entire approbation of all their friends. Agathias found that treasure he wished for and deserved, in the possession of one of the most virtuous and accomplished of her sex ; and Eliza's transient sufferings, which she bore so gracefully, were rewarded with a happiness that still continues undecaying, in conjunction with one of the best of men.

THE



THE UNION OF LOVE AND
PHILOSOPHY.

SIR Harry Bellair had spent the early part of his youth in that whirl of pleasures and pains which always attend the fashionable way of living among the great, when he at once determined to retire to a country seat he had in Worcestershire. His time was there agreeably divided between hunting, walking, and reading. With what pleasure did he look back on that stormy sea, whose hidden rocks he now no longer feared! With what satisfaction did he congratulate himself on his having had resolution enough to enter the port of safety! Free from prejudices, delivered from the tyrannical yoke of the passions, he then beheld things in their true light. The mask under which dissimulation, treachery, perjury, infidelity, and ingratitude, conceal themselves, was fallen off; he saw all their deformity, and lamented the fate of those who were exposed to them. Enraptured with Philosophy, her charms were his greatest delight. How, cried he sometimes, can men prefer tumultuous and noisy pleasures to the tranquillity of the wise! alas! with what anxious difficulty, what regret, what torment, what remorse, is a moment of pleasure not purchased in the world? with what thick darkness is that feeble twilight not preceded and followed? The wise man, on the contrary, is always contented, always happy; his pleasures are less animated, but they are much

much purer, and far more durable ; he owes his happiness to his own reflections only ; can he be under any fear of its miscarrying ?

Notwithstanding all the secrets which Sir Harry found in the study of Wisdom, it was not long before he perceived that something was wanting to complete his happiness. Naturally tender, he had renounced love more out of pique than reason. The repeated infidelities which he had experienced from some of his mistresses, had contributed greatly to his retirement ; and, in the opinion he was that levity is inseparable from the fair sex, he carefully avoided whatever might have led him into an engagement. But the god of hearts, who laughed at his precautions, knew how to render them useless.

At some distance from the house where Sir Harry had fixed his abode, lived a young widow, on whom nature had lavished her treasures. Emilia (that was her name) joined to the most captivating person every charm of the mind. The death of a tenderly-beloved husband, the fear of not being able to curb the emotions of a heart made to receive the tenderest impressions of love, had conducted her into a solitude where every thing re-traced to her the image of the dear spouse whom she regretted. Retired as she was, Sir Harry's arrival made too much noise for her to be ignorant of it. His resolution was so extraordinary in a man of his age, that she wished to be acquainted with him. It was not long before she was satisfied.

A violent storm having overtaken him while he was hunting, he was obliged to seek for shelter at Emilia's house. This was the first time of his seeing her. Gods ! how lovely she appeared to him ! all his schemes vanished in an instant : his heart presented itself to receive the shaft. Astonished, struck motionless with

with admiration, he uttered a few incoherent words. Emilia, on whom a tender sympathy already wrought, perceived with secret pleasure the effect of her charms. After the usual compliments on such occasions, she made the conversation fall on the pleasures of a rural life. Sir Harry, recovering in the mean time from his first confusion, spoke like a sensible man who has seen the world; and, before he took leave of Emilia, obtained her permission to repeat his visits.

At his return home, retiring to his apartment, he reflected on all that had passed. He probed the inmost recesses of his heart, and this scrutiny served only to convince him that he was deeply in love. Philosophy made in vain a few feeble efforts to stifle a passion which, in a man of Sir Harry's disposition, could not but increase rapidly in a short time. His situation seemed delightful to him. That terrible chasm, which even the closest study had not been able to fill, now disappeared; the wants of his heart were satisfied; his imagination transported him into a charming grove, where he saw Emilia seated on a bank of flowers, encircled by the graces, loves, and pleasures; he was at her feet, in the most affecting attitude; a languishing look was directed at him; her pretty mouth was opened to say—I love you.--- What happiness did he not enjoy!

Emilia, on her side, was not less touched. How amiable did Sir Harry appear to her! his graceful behaviour, his sense, his person, had made the deepest impression on her heart. She could not disguise it to herself. The sweet agitation of her soul was accompanied with charms, to her, inexpressible. The memory of her husband, the most serious reflections on the dangers of love, could not stand a moment against the delicate emotions of a new-born passion. With what pleasure did she behold the eagerness to please

please, the tender assiduities, the delicate attentions of her lover!

They used frequently to walk together in an avenue which led from the Severn to her house. 'It seems to me extraordinary, (said this young lady one day to her lover) that a gentleman of your age and merit should have broken off all commerce with the world. I should be much obliged to you, if you would tell me the reasons which have induced you to take such a step.'——'Can I ever wish to keep any thing secret from you, Madam?' answered Bel-lair: 'I will inform you of what has been known to but very few.' Our two lovers having seated themselves upon the grass, Sir Harry continued thus:

Master of a considerable fortune, I appeared in the world with splendour enough to attract the eyes of the multitude. My company was desired in many houses. That of Lady ——— had the preference. The handsomest ladies in London met there, more out of vanity than choice. Some of them made evident advances to me. I was young and unexperienced; my heart had wants, and required to be satisfied; accordingly it was not long before I formed an attachment. The person whom I chose for the object of my attention, though past the bloom of youth, had yet remaining a thousand charms. Sprightly black eyes, a fine complexion, a lovely smile which spoke infinite sense, inexpressible gracefulness in all her actions, an elegant shape, and a great deal of wit; all this formed together a whole which many people thought pretty. She seemed at first to pride herself on the conquest she had made of me: but too frivolous to attach herself, she repaid my tenderness with a coin which never will be current among those who think with delicacy. I soon grew disgusted. Several others to whom I made successively
a tender

a tender of my homage, appeared to me in a short time to deserve only the contempt of an honest man. At length, despairing of ever finding what I sought for, I returned home with a design to give myself up entirely to study.

As I was walking one day in the park, I perceived a young person whose appearance struck me. There was something so noble and interesting in her looks, that it was impossible to behold her without admiring. A sudden emotion seized me at this sight; my heart fluttered; my eyes could not quit the dear object which fixed all my attention. A woman somewhat in years accompanied her. I would have accosted them, but dared not. Whilst I was deliberating within myself whether I should speak to them or not, love urging, and the fear of displeasing keeping me back, they went away, before I had come to any resolution. I would have followed them; but the coach into which they got, drove off so fast, that I was obliged to return home without having satisfied my curiosity.

It was then that I began to make a difference between real love, and those transient fantastical tastes which owe their birth to vanity and sensual pleasure. The image of my unknown charmer followed me every where; the most barren spots, the most unfrequented places, were those which pleased me best.—You was in love then, interrupted Emilia, with an agitation of mind which she could not conceal.—Yes, Madam, I was in love; and to that love it is that I am to impute all the misfortunes of my life: no, I owe every thing to it; it is that which has conducted me into this solitude: charming retreat! shall I not owe to you all the happiness of my life, if I can touch the heart of the estimable object which has now conquered me? Should I have known her, had it not

been for you?—But to continue a narrative in which you, Madam, seem to interest yourself.

Few days passed without my going to the park, in hopes of again seeing there my fair incognita. One day that I was quite lost in pleasingly musing on her, I staid there later than usual. Night came on, and it was 11 o'clock before I thought of retiring. Passing by a decent-looking house, my ear was struck with repeated sighs. I drew near, and saw through the parlour-window one of the most moving sights that ever I beheld. An elderly lady, bathed in tears, was stretched out upon an arm-chair betwixt two young damsels, one of which (judge of my surprize) was the amiable fair one I had been seeking for.—It is not I that am to be pitied, said that lady to them, letting fall fresh showers of tears; death will soon render me insensible of my misfortune: but you, my dear children, what will become of you? It is for you that I shed the bitterest of tears: who will defend you from the dreadful dangers which threaten you? Poverty is, alas! in general, the worst of foes to virtue.

Consulting only the emotions of my heart, I burst suddenly into the room, and threw myself at the old lady's feet. Affrighted at so uncommon and unexpected a sight, she at the first screamed out: but soon after, finding by my behaviour and words, that she had no danger to fear from me, she desired me to rise. You, madam, said I to her, after I was seated, you, and your amiable family, are exposed to the vilest insults of fortune! On whom does fate vent it's rage? Does virtue, joined to beauty, deserve such cruel treatment? but, after all, are your misfortunes so great as not to admit of any remedy?

My concern was so visible, and the comfort which the afflicted find in unbosoming themselves to those they look upon as their friends is so great, that Mrs. Meanwell,

Meanwell, (for that was her name) after looking stedfastly at me for a few moments, opened her heart to me in the following terms: "Though I have not the honour of knowing you, sir, I feel myself so prejudiced in your favour, that I think I should make a bad return for your extremely kind and obliging behaviour, if I was to keep any thing secret from you.

"The father of these children, after having held for many years a distinguished place in the law, died, and left behind him a great reputation, with very little wealth; the usual effect of untainted probity. He left me but two thousand pounds, placed out at interest in the hands of a rich banker. I lived some years in that sweet tranquility which is known only to those whom the smallness of their fortune obliges to moderate their desires; which may be looked upon as the source of true happiness. Why has my felicity been so soon and so cruelly disturbed? The banker, in whose hands all that I had was placed, has just now failed: by this means I am reduced to the most shocking distress, have no hope, nor any resource. Can there be a more deplorable situation?" At these words her tears flowed anew.

I own, madam, said I to her, that your misfortunes are great: but if they were still greater, they do not authorize despair. The virtue which you have practised all your life, offers you a resource on this occasion: she only can set us above the furious blows of adverse fortune. It is in our greatest, our most sudden adversities, that she shines brightest: besides, perhaps I may be happy enough to be of some little service to you. May I presume to offer you five hundred pounds, which I received yesterday.—Your generosity charms me, answered Mrs. Meanwell; but I should ill deserve it, if I accepted your offer. To howsoever low an ebb fortune may reduce us, we

never will be burthenfome to any one. My daughters can work well at their needle; the labour of their hands will provide for our fubfiftence, and we will bid defiance to the rigours of fate, content with not having deferved them." At every word which Mrs. Meanwell pronounced, her efforts to flop her burfting tears were evident. "How fine are thefe fentiments! how truly heroical! But would you mortify me fo far as not to accept what I have the pleafure to offer you? ought one to carry the point of delicacy fo far as to refufe even to borrow a fum which is not great?"——"How ingenious is your generofity, fir," answered fhe: "confider that our virtue is all we have left."——"Ah! madam, fortune may grow weary of perfecuting you; your banker's affairs may be made up. What! fhall that lovely child be reduced to live by the work of her own hands! my God! the very thought of it alone makes me fhudder. What! you! added I, throwing myfelf at the feet of the young perfon; you, the moft perfect work of nature! you, who were made to give laws to the whole world, fhall you be confounded among the croud of thofe unhappy beings to whom indigence leaves, for their fubfiftence, no other refource than that of labour! I never will fuffer it, continued I, rifing. Madam, added I, turning towards Mrs. Meanwell, I beg your pardon for thefe tranfports which I could not fuppreff.—I love your charming daughter; were I to attempt to deny it, every thing would betray me: but I love her with all the refpect due to fuperior merit. Founded on the moft perfect efteem, my love afpires only at the happinefs of being united to her by indiffoluble ties. Look upon me as your fon: I have at leaft the fentiments of one for you." At thefe words I withdrew.

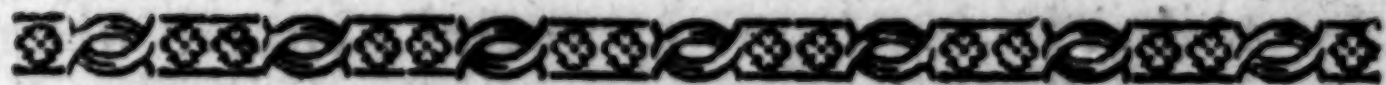
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The next morning I sent five hundred pounds to Mrs. Meanwell: it was all the ready money I had. From that time I lived as it were at her house. Her daughter seemed to receive my assiduities with a sense of gratitude: she would sometimes tell me that my love touched her, that her heart was sensible of all it's value. But it was easy to perceive that these words were not dictated by inclination. Such indifference distracted, but did not quite discourage me: I flattered myself that I might at length win her by my perseverance; but all my hopes vanished at once in the most cruel manner. Going one day, as usual, to Mrs. Meanwell's, I found her excessively dejected. Surprized and uneasy, I enquired what was the cause of it. She told me, that her daughter had disappeared since the day before, and that she had the strongest reasons to apprehend she had been carried off by a young man for whom she had long had a most violent passion: a passion which, however, she had always made a mystery of to her. What a thunder stroke was this for a fond and delicate lover! I returned home in a condition easier to be imagined than described. A few hours after Mrs. Meanwell sent me back the sum she had borrowed, with a letter which left me no longer any room to doubt of my misfortune.

I was inconsolable for a long time: but at length, reason getting the better, and contempt taking by degrees the place of fury, I retired into this solitude, firmly resolved for ever to renounce love. I aspired after that inward tranquility which is the object of the wise man's desires, and was even not far from attaining it, when you overset my schemes, destroyed my resolutions, and taught me that love will always triumph over philosophy.

Emilia made no reply to the tender sentiment couched under these last words, but by a complacent smile,

smile, which kindled hope in Sir Harry's heart, "Can I, madam, cried he, be so happy as to find that the sincerest love has made some impression on you! What words can express the raptures I now feel! my suit will not be rejected; your fair eyes tell me so. Into what extacy of joy does their language throw me!" Sir Harry spoke with such grace; that grace was so affecting; there was something so natural, so tender, and so persuasive in his actions, and in his manner of expressing himself, that Emilia could no longer conceal the conquest he had made of her. "Ah! Sir Harry, said she with a look which none but true lovers know the value of, why are you so amiable, and why am I so weak? Ought I to have unveiled to you the secret of a heart, which is but too sensible of your merit?" At these words she stopt: a blush heightened the splendor of her charms; modesty and desire were visible in her eyes, ready to combat with each other: virtuous love, the offspring of sentiment, soon reconciled them; and shortly after lighted the torch of Hymen for these two lovers. Blessed with a wife, as amiable as she was virtuous, Sir Harry's wishes were compleatly crowned. He then experienced that letters, without love, cannot suffice to constitute the felicity of a man of delicate sentiments, and that both of them must be united to render such an one happy.



FRIENDSHIP PROSTITUTED;

OR,

THE STORY OF MELINDA.

OF all the distressing circumstances in human life, surely the most pitiable is that of a gentleman's child, educated with the strictest care, tenderness, and delicacy, left a destitute, parentless, poor dependant on the caprice and whims of some near relations, or friends, as they affect to call themselves, whilst the tide of affluence is rolling in. The females of this unhappy class are much greater objects of compassion than the other sex, the latter having a more plain and open field to work upon; custom, as well as nature, has formed for us quite different occupations in life. What has particularly led me into this observation, and general compassion, is the present situation of one of those unhappy young ladies above mentioned, the various scenes of whose life are perfectly well known to me: she is a recent instance of the prostitution of the word friendship. I shall proceed in a few words to relate some of the most material incidents of her life.

Some miles distant from London there lived a gentleman, eminent in the law; he was in general considered a money-getting man, tho' his first setting out in life did not promise much. He married a lady of foreign extraction; her family was unexceptionable, but they were not blessed with an affluent fortune, which made her portion but small; her merit and personal beauty made amends for that much-desired

ingredient. Counsellor ——'s family were highly irritated at his making so imprudent a match, which made him doubly eager to reap the sweets of his profession, ambitious of exciting in the breast of his relations rather envy than pity. Their continual flights and ill usage never prevented him from making an affectionate husband, and she proved a truly amiable wife. Melinda was the first and only fruit of their happy union. Every care was taken to embellish her mind, and set off her person to the best advantage; her figure was not so striking as that of her mother, but her disposition was most happily turned, and her understanding brighter than is in general seen. These accomplishments, natural and acquired, attracted the notice of the distinguishing part of the town her parents chiefly resided in; but among the variety of grave and gay that resorted thither, Lord B——'s family sought her company most. Lady B—— and her daughters were so charmed with her, that they seemed never easy but when Melinda made one of the company; they introduced her to all their parties, styling her their particular friend, and always added, that she had more real merit than any other girl that existed. These high encomiums, too lavish to be thought sincere by any person of experience, were strongly relished by Melinda, who as yet was unacquainted with any thing but sincerity and truth. Not that flattery, decently cloathed, is not a bait that the wisest of us may be sometimes caught in.

Melinda grew entirely fond of the B—— family; gaiety and pleasure is the natural pursuit of youth, which consequently made her prefer their company to that of her parents. She lost sight of the home-felt happiness she might have enjoyed, and preferred the chit-chat and giddy sound of the beau-monde to private admonishments of a fond father and mother;
and

and indeed few girls of her age, but just then turned of sixteen, have a proper sense of the love and duty they owe their parents. Her imagination being uncommonly lively, and her sentiments of friendship rather romantically refined; she thought all the hours she could dedicate to her dear friends, Lady B—— and her family, were part of her duty. The father and mother, too partially fond, gratified her in every desire; they were often uneasy at her being so much away from them, but when the important point was discussed, how necessary it was for young people to cultivate a good acquaintance, and establish a steady friendship with people of consequence, such as Lord B——'s family, they grew tolerably reconciled to her frequent excursions in such good company. London, Bath, and Bristol, were seldom neglected by them at the proper seasons. Melinda's dress and appearance being to the full as elegant as lady B——'s daughters, she was in all ranks of company looked upon as a young lady of fortune and fashion, and addressed as such by gentlemen of large possessions. Her kind officious friend, Lady B——, interferred upon these occasions, and used her powerful arguments to dissuade her from thinking of matrimony, often repeating, that a girl so supremely blessed as she was, with every indulgence and prospect of perfect happiness, should not change her state till she had at least tasted some of the bitters, as well as the sweets of life. Melinda, who felt nothing but ease and tranquility, readily gave way to Lady B——'s advice, and thought it a fresh proof of her regard, and that her interest was the sole motive. Besides, to a young lady of such unbounded liberty, matrimony is too often considered a total confinement. Her parents, who, I must own, were absurdly indulgent to her in most cases, never urged her to accept of any

of the several advantageous offers made her, but let her pursue her inclinations; thus she went on in a full career of glory, as she vainly imagined; but our greatest enjoyments are of short duration. Just as she had got leave to accompany the B—— family to Scarborough, her mother was attacked with a fever, that carried her off in a few days. She did not see the bad consequences that were likely to ensue from so fatal a stroke; however, her intended journey was postponed, and she, for some days, gave herself up to violent grief, and joined in her father's affliction, which was immoderate whilst it lasted. She consoled him in the best manner she could, till Lady B——'s family as usual, all kindness and attention, broke in upon her private sorrows. They prevailed on her to rouse and dissipate her griefs, and paid such close court to her, that she soon regained her former gaiety, and grew weary of the house of solitude. In this disposition she required but little persuasion to return into the great world again. The B—— family, whom she ever considered her first friends, was eternally preaching up to her how improper it was for a young lady to keep house for a single man, though he were her father. Lady B—— begged she would look upon her as a mother, for she regarded her equally with her own children, and entreated that she should make her house her home.

These expressions were delivered with so much warmth, and seeming good-nature, and Melinda had so many years experienced affection from the whole family, that she held Lady B——'s precept rather more sacred than she did her father's, the consequence of which proved in the end her ruin. All hours were lost to her when she was not with her beloved friends: continual absence made her father soon grow tired of labouring for a child, whose affections were seemingly
so

so much alienated from him; he by degrees gave over all business, and lived entirely at his country house. He was still fond of a family way, and could not bear to live without a female friend. Being so very retired, he forgot, or rather quitted the decors of a genteel life; this, joined with the jealousy he had of his daughter, prompted him to marry a young woman who had lived with him as an upper servant since his wife's death. She had nothing to recommend her but a tolerable face; she was mean, selfish, and artful. Melinda, from the æra of this marriage, may date her misery; her father grew visibly careless about her, insomuch that he never asked her why she stayed so long away. When she visited him, he received her coldly, by telling her his house must be stupid for her, after coming from so much gaiety and splendor; bid her quickly return, lest she should forfeit the esteem of her worthy friends. But this was uttered with an air of jealousy and derision, which Melinda never saw, as she was inclined to think well of every body, and she continued to imagine herself quite secure in his regard. It may be well asked, Where was all her great understanding and penetration? The mist thrown in her eyes was, his continuing, through some motive of pride or other, to allow her as handsome as usual for her person and pocket. His marriage he kept a profound secret, and she returned to her friends in London with the notion of being as high in his favour as ever. In private conversation Lady B—— often expressed her surprize, that he should quit his profession at so early an age, and said, she should think it would be an amusement to him, who led so solitary a life. Melinda replied, that as she thought her father had acquired a handsome independent fortune, she should be sorry if he continued to fatigue himself on her account;

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count; that he was particularly fond of a country life, and could she prevail on him to come sometimes to London, her happiness would be compleat, as she could share then more of her time with him; but in winter she did not doubt of being able to persuade him.

Poor Melinda! how little did she know what was meditating against her in the country! Her father was entirely wrapped up in his new choice; she grew to have more power over him than one of superior rank; she had all apparent humility, for her designs were concealed under the most artful and dangerous hypocrisy. She never said any thing plainly disrespectful of Melinda, yet by many significant hints she would express astonishment, that Miss could stay so long away from so kind a papa; that it often proved, that indulgent parents had the most inattentive children. Mr. — wanted but few hints to wean his love from his daughter; he had not many sparks of tenderness remaining for her; his artful wife got so entire an ascendant over him, that he fell in with her manner, and approved of her notions; her opinion at length became a law to him. It is not strange, that men's natures should change with every gust of passion, and the most sensible of them become the greatest dupes.

Mrs. —, for by that name must we call her, soon discovered the power she had over her husband, and turned it entirely to her advantage; and what compleatly answered her purpose, was her proving with child. In this interval of time, Melinda frequently wrote the most respectful letters to her father, and grew quite hurt at his never returning her an answer. Her uneasiness was so great, that she set out for his house, with a determined resolution to spend some time there; but on her arrival it was too obvious,

obvious, that the scene was entirely changed. She was no more received with smiles and good-nature; every person and thing about the house wore a gloomy aspect, and her astonishment was infinitely added to, when one of the old servant's told her in confidence, that her father was married to that mean wench. His doing a thing so much beneath him, together with the alteration that was in his behaviour, threw her into a deep melancholy, and she repented, when too late, her quitting her father's house. However, she put the best face she could on matters, and resolved to struggle against his resentment. He continued to treat her with indifference, and his new bride carried a high hand over her, yet with a pretended respect, for she had not leave to own her marriage. She took every occasion of representing the country to Melinda in a most disagreeable light, and would often say, What a pity it was such a fine young lady as she was should banish herself from society. Melinda became no stranger to her designs of getting rid of her: she was seldom honoured with her father's conversation, but if ever he talked to her at all, it was to remind her never to lose a good friend, meaning it as a hint to her to return to Lord B——'s family directly. Tho' she never intermeddled in family affairs, her mother-in-law grew quite tired of her; I suppose she was in some measure a restraint upon her actions. As her father made still a secret of his marriage, it was a matter of surprise to Melinda, as well as every one that was acquainted with the match, what could induce him to keep it so private, unless it was with justice that he was ashamed of his choice. Melinda grew sick of her father's house; there was something so disagreeable now in it, that she languished to be with her good friends in London. She faithfully communicated her situation to them by letters

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letters every post, and opened her mind as candidly to lady B——, as she would to a second self. She thought her being so ingenuous would make her doubly acceptable to them at her return. Tho' she was in high life from her childhood, she was as yet unacquainted with the capriciousness of the generality of great folks. Mrs. —— and her husband were laying schemes to get rid of Melinda, and she ardently wished for a decent opportunity to return to her great friends in London.

Whilst each of their minds was agitated by different hopes and wishes, tending to the same end, her father was taken very ill with a disorder that required his immediate drinking the Bath waters. He could not go any where without his beloved consort; he thought it would look remarkable to bring her, and leave his daughter behind; and he was not so dead to the censures of the world, as to abandon her at once. After some time debating with himself how to act, he one morning ordered her to attend him in his room. He received her rather more tenderly than usual, and after a pause of some moments, "You see, child, (said he) what a bad state of health I am suddenly reduced to; the physicians think the Bath waters necessary to me; I shall not rob you of the great satisfaction you always have in being with your friends in London; I will send a post-chaise up with you and your maid to them to-morrow morning. I must inform you, that I cannot supply your wants as plentifully as usual, my money being in such a situation, as prevents my commanding it with the freedom I used to do; besides, this journey I am about to take, will create new expences; the Bath physicians must have large fees; you must be saving, and do the best you can with what you have got, until I grow better."

The

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The readers who recollect the former passages of Melinda's life, need not wonder that she was much affected at the whole of her father's discourse; she knew not what to say or think, and her only comfort was in the different reception she should meet with from her kind and constant friends in London. She the next morning set out, according to his orders, and had but little reluctance in parting with him. She thought his whole life and behaviour was a state of deception, and with some reason feared she had little to hope from his generosity. She apprised Lady B——, by letter, of her intention of being at her house by a particular hour; yet when she arrived, glowing with friendship and gratitude to them for past favours, and a thousand other emotions that had risen from the late ill usage she had met with in her father's house, she found all the family gone out for the evening, and no apology left for such unusual neglect. She waited up, fatigued and tired, for a considerable time, till at length quite weary, she went to rest.

In the morning Melinda arose hastily, expecting some or other of the family to her room, to bid her welcome; but in this she was disappointed; for she saw none of them till the hour of breakfast; and Lady B——s first address to her was in these words: "So, Miss, I find you are returned to London in disgrace: pray what quarrel have you and your new mamma had, child? you ought to make it your study to please her, though she was ever so contemptible. What will become of you, if you should disoblige your father? A girl bred up as you have been, will think it hard to get her own livelihood; and every family has enough to do to provide for their own; for my part, I began to think things did not look well in your favour from the time your father gave over his profession:

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on: I thought you flattered yourself full much, when you imagined he had acquired a good fortune: people of business may make a good appearance to the eye of the world, and yet have no solid foundation. 'Tis indeed a pity you were not brought up in a different manner: parents have a great deal to answer for, that give their children high notions, without a power of giving them a suitable fortune. I think, Miss, you were wrong to quit his house at any rate. Suppose this woman his wife should prevail on him to settle what little he has upon her; then, child, you will be left destitute. Your father's friends have never looked upon him since his marriage with your mother; and her relations, if any she has, are quite unknown to you. I think the most adviseable step you can take, is to follow your father to Bath, as soon as you think he is settled there. I'll have a place taken for you in the stage; humour him and her in every particular; 'tis your interest so to do."

Melinda, as may well be imagined, was all amazement at this different style and behaviour in her friend. Good God! she exclaimed, and burst into a flood of tears, is this Lady B—— that treats me so contemptibly! what can work such a change in her? how am I to act? I am in a manner abandoned by my father, and spurned at by those I thought my best friends; and where to go, or what to do, I know not. In this dilemma she continued for some hours; and at length her pride and jealousy prompted her to conclude she had best follow Lady B——'s advice, and set out for Bath. She summoned her best resolution to encounter every disappointment, and took her leave of the family with a heart full of grief. Lady Caroline, who really loved her, was the only one of the family that payed her the common tribute of a few tears, and hoped her dear girl would soon return again.

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again. This invitation came from her alone, which did not escape Melinda.

She left London oppressed with every kind of sorrow; her heart was replete with gratitude to the B—— family for past favours; but how to account for their entire change of behaviour, she was at a great loss. Upon the strictest examination she could not charge herself with being the occasion of it. Full of anxiety and secret forebodings, she set out for Bath: it was with some difficulty she found her father's lodging: the first person that she met on her entry was her mother-in-law: the sight of Melinda mortified her much, as she knew she must act a part to conceal her marriage. She expressed much wonder at seeing her, and told her she was sure her papa did not expect her; that there was no accommodation in that house for so fine a lady; but she supposed she only came on a party of pleasure with Lady B——'s family. Melinda, self-conscious of the bad footing she was on with her once great friends and intimates, fell into tears: when she recovered herself, she enquired after her father's health, and said, she came on purpose to see him. She was answered, that the physicians had but indifferent hopes of him; and she feared the sight of her, when he least expected it, would increase his disorder. The truth was, Mrs. — did not like he should have any interview with his daughter, least he should alter his intention of settling all the money he had in the funds or elsewhere upon her, and the child she then carried, he having made a will to that purpose. Now was the time to exert her art. To be openly rude to Melinda, she thought would be bringing on her powerful enemies; and being polite, she imagined would give her too great a liking to be in the house; and she resolved upon getting rid of her at any rate. She did not suspect that Melinda knew any thing of her marriage; but took pains

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pains to let her know how much she was in her father's confidence, as upon the strength of being a favourite, she thought she might use some authority. Night approaching, Melinda asked Mrs. ——— where she was to sleep. Not in this house, miss, I am sure, says the brute; there is no lodging for one more than is in it already: I thought you were provided with one at some of your great friends. The girl was so weighed down with a variety of strange unusual treatment, that she did not chuse to expostulate with her, but hoped she might be allowed to sit up all night with her father. This offer was strongly objected to, and she was not suffered to see him; nor did he know she was in the house for some days, till Melinda one day took the opportunity of her absence, and got into her father's chamber. She found him very weak and melancholy, and his health so much gone, that he could scarce distinguish one person from another. She was so much shocked at the sight of him, that she forgot every other suffering she had met with in life, and employed her whole thoughts upon giving him all the assistance in her power to aid his recovery; but it was in vain, life was almost spun out. Upon Mrs. ———'s return home, she seemed quite enraged that Melinda should be admitted to her father's apartments, and said directly, that the sight of her, she was sure, would be his death; and these ungenerous and ill-natured words gained some credit; for he died within a very few hours. This was the time for her to assume all her consequence, and treat Melinda with the highest contempt. She immediately owned her marriage, and triumphed over Melinda's just afflictions. She suddenly came up to London and administered to her husband's will, and left the unhappy girl as destitute as if she dropped out of the clouds.

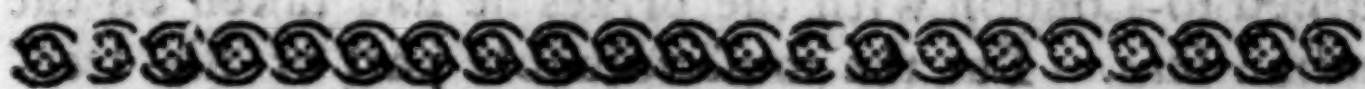
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What recourse to take Melinda knew not: she was distracted between grief and despair: she with justice thought herself destitute; she had neither money nor friends; nor was it a time to make herself known to her former acquaintance at Bath, who perhaps only respected her according to the consequence they thought her of. Lady B—— occurred to her as the only resource: she wrote a very moving letter by that night's post, and begged her advice in what manner to act. Her old good-natured friend, before she deigned to answer her letter, sent to the commons to have her father's will looked into. She found he had made an infamous disposal of 12,000l. between his wife and the child she then carried; and in case of the child's death, he left the whole at her discretion; but to Melinda only a poor pittance, which he could not dispose of, as it was settled at his marriage, her mother's trifling fortune of three hundred pounds. From Lady B——'s character the reader will not be surprised to find that she treated Melinda but indifferently; she wrote her a few lines, it is true; and gave her a slight invitation to her house, and said she might be there for some little time, till she could find a way of life suitable to her father's provision for her. This letter could not be thought to give any ease to Melinda's unhappy state of mind: she, with great reluctance, accepted her invitation, and arrived at Lady B——'s house with an awe she never felt before. She soon perceived she was held in a very cheap light by the whole family, except Lady Caroline, who, had she then power equal to her good-will, would have proved a sincere friend. Melinda applied to Lady B——, to know in what manner she could support herself with the trifle she had in right of her mother. She quickly answered, she really could not point out any thing better for her than something either in the millinery

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millinery or warehouse way ; never considering that a young lady, bred up as she was, could be no ways capable of such an undertaking ; the girl's pride was quite hurt, and she gave herself up as lost for ever. Her good friend upbraided her with vanity and ignorance, and gave her broad hints to quit her house. She took a little lodging for herself ; but quickly found the interest of what was left her would not support her in common decency. Lady Caroline paid her frequent stolen visits, and sympathized in all her troubles : she advised her to be a companion to some lady of rank and character, and said she would use her endeavours to find out some person that would treat her according to her merit. After using her interest with all her acquaintance, she found out a lady, as she imagined, calculated to make poor Melinda happy : she represented her situation, and recommended her in the strongest terms as an amiable companion ; and she made not the least doubt but they would be equally happy : but lady M— soon altered her behaviour, and treats her indeed as an *humble* companion. She has already got the vulgar appellation of a toad-eater in the family, though there is no girl in the world less calculated for a servile flatterer. Loaded with all manner of indignities, her situation claims universal pity. The once gay and thoughtless Melinda, is now, in truth, reduced to a situation she should not, in her prosperity, have wished the worst enemy she had to be in ; an humble dependant on the unaccountable caprice of a haughty, imperious, fickle woman of quality.

FRIEND.



FRIENDSHIP PUT TO THE TEST.

NELSON and Blanford, two youths of family and fortune, were distinguished at the university by a friendship worthy of the first ages. As it was founded on a perfect agreement of sentiments and principles, time only served to confirm it; and the more it was enlightened every day, the more intimate it every day became.

Their studies being finished, each of them took to that way of life which nature invited him. Blanford, active, robust, and courageous, determined for the profession of arms, and for the sea-service. Voyages were his school. Inured to fatigues, instructed by dangers, he arrived, from rank to rank, to the command of a vessel.

Nelson, endowed with a manly eloquence, and of a genius wise and profound, was of the number of those deputies, of whom the national senate is composed; and in a short time he rendered himself famous there.

Thus each of them served his country, happy in the good which he did it: while Blanford sustained the shock of war, and of the elements, Nelson stood proof against favour and ambition. Examples of an heroic zeal, one would have thought that, jealous of each other, they contended for virtue and glory, or rather that, at two extremities of the world, the same spirit animated them both.

Blanford

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Blanford enriched himself by doing his duty : he returned to London with the prizes he had taken on the Indian seas. But the most valuable part of his treasure was a young Indian, of a beauty that would have been uncommon in any climate. A Bramin, to whom heaven had given this only daughter in reward for his virtues, had consigned her up in his dying moments, to the hands of the generous Englishman.

Coraly had not yet attained her fifteenth year ; her father made her his delight and the tenderest object of his cares. The village in which he dwelt was taken and pillaged by the English. Solinzeb (that was the Bramin's name) presents himself on the threshold of his habitation. " Hold ! " said he to the soldiers, who were come quite up to his humble sanctuary, " hold ! whoever you be, the God of nature, the beneficent God, is yours and mine : respect in me his minister. "

These words, the sound of his voice, his venerable air, impress respect ; but the fatal stroke is given, and the Bramin falls, mortally wounded, into the arms of his trembling daughter.

At that instant Blanford arrives. He comes to repress the fury of the soldiery. He cries out, he makes a passage through them, he sees the Bramin leaning on a young girl scarce able to support him, and who, tottering herself, bathes the old man with her tears. At this sight nature, beauty, love, exercise all their influence on Blanford's soul. He easily discovers in Solinzeb, the father of her who embraces him with such affectionate sorrow.

" Barbarians, said he to the soldiers, be gone ! Is it feebleness and innocence, old age and childhood, that you ought to attack ? " " Mortal, sacred to me, " said he to the Bramin, " live, live, suffer me to repair the crime of those savages. " At these words he takes
him

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him into his arms, makes him lie down, examines the wound, and procures him all the assistance of art. Coraly, witness to the piety, the sensibility of this stranger, thought she saw a God descend from heaven to succour and comfort her father.

Blanford, who did not quit Solinzeb, endeavoured to soften the sorrow of his daughter ; but she seemed to have a presage of her misfortune, and remained drowned in tears.

The night following the Bramin expired. His daughter, who filled the air with her cries, was not able to detach herself from that livid and cold corpse, which she watered with her tears. At last, sorrow exhausted her strength, and the attendants availed themselves of her faintness to carry her away from the melancholy place.

Blanford, whom his duty recalled from Asia to Europe, carried thither with him his pupil ; and though she was beautiful and easy to seduce, though he was young and strongly taken, he respected her innocence. During the voyage, he employed himself in teaching her a little English, in giving her an idea of the manners of Europe, and in disengaging her docile mind from the prejudices of her country.

Nelson was gone to meet his friend. They saw each other again with the most sensible joy. But the first sight of Coraly struck and afflicted Nelson. "What do you do with this girl?" said he to Blanford in a severe tone. "Is she a captive, a slave? Have you carried her off from her parents? Have you made nature mourn?" Blanford related what had passed ; he gave him so touching a portrait of the innocence, candour, and sensibility of the young Indian, that Nelson himself was moved at it. "This is my design," continued Blanford ; "at my mother's, and under her eyes, she shall be instructed in our manners : I will form that
simple

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simple and docile heart; and if she can be happy with me, I will marry her."——"I am easy, and acknowledge my friend."

The surprises and different emotions of a young stranger, to whom every thing is new, have been often described; Coraly experienced them all. But her happy facility in seizing, and comprehending every thing, even out-stripped the pains they took to instruct her. Genius, talents, and the graces, were in her innate gifts: they had only the trouble of developing them by a slight culture. She was near sixteen, and Blanford was going to marry her, when death deprived him of his mother. Coraly lamented her as if she had been her own; and the pains which she took to console Blanford, touched him sensibly. But during the mourning, which retarded the nuptials, he had orders to embark on a new expedition. He went to see Nelson, and he confided to him, not the grief which he felt at quitting the young Indian; Nelson would have made him blush at that: but the grief of leaving her to herself, in the midst of a world which was unknown to her. "If my mother," said he, "were still living, she would be her guide; but the ill fortune which pursues this poor girl has taken away from her her only support." "Have you then forgot," said Nelson, "that I have a sister, and that my house is your own?"——"Ah! Nelson," replied Blanford, fixing his eyes on his, "if you knew what that charge is which you would have me confide to you!" At these words Nelson smiled with disdain. "This uneasiness," said he, "is a fine compliment to us both. You dare not trust me with a woman!" Blanford, in confusion, blushed. "Pardon my weakness:" said he, "it made me see danger where my virtue finds none. I judged of your heart by my own: it is me whom my fear humbles. Let us say no more of it;

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it; I shall set out in peace, leaving the pledge of my love under the guard of friendship. But, my dear Nelson, if I die, let me request you to take my place."

—"Yes, that of father, I promise you: ask no more."—"Enough; nothing further detains me."

The adieus of Coraly and Blanford were mingled with tears; but Coraly's tears were not those of love. A lively gratitude, a respectful friendship were the tenderest sentiments which Blanford had inspired her with. Her own sensibility was not known to her: the dangerous advantage of unfolding it was reserved for Nelson.

Blanford was handsomer than his friend; but his figure, like his temper, had a manly and austere fierceness in it. The sentiments which he had conceived for his pupil seemed to have given him rather the disposition of a father than of a lover: his attentions were without complaisance, his goodness without charms, his concern tender, but solemn, and his desire was that of rendering her happy with him rather than of being happy with her.

Nelson, who was of a more engaging temper, had also more sweetness in his features, and his language. His eyes especially, expressed the eloquence of the soul. His look, the most touching in the world, seemed to penetrate to the bottom of people's hearts, and to procure him a secret correspondence with them. His voice thundered when there was a necessity to defend the interests of his country, her laws, her glory, her liberty; but in familiar conversation it was full of sensibility and charms. What rendered him still more engaging, was an air of modesty diffused over his whole person.

Lady Juliet Albury, his sister, was a widow of great prudence, and an excellent heart; but of that kind of unhappy prudence which always anticipates

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misfortune, and accelerates instead of preventing it. It was she who was charged with consoling the young Indian. "I have lost my second father," said that amiable girl to her. "I have now only you and Nelson in the world. I will love you, I will obey you. My life and heart are yours." While she was yet embracing Juliet, Nelson arrives, and Coraly rises, with a smiling and heavenly countenance, but still bedewed with tears.

"Well," said Nelson to his sister, "have you consoled her a little?" "Yes, I am consoled, I have no further complaint," cried the young Indian, at the same time wiping her fine black eyes. Then making Nelson seat himself by the side of Juliet, and falling on her knees before them, she took them by their hands, put them one in the other, and pressing them tenderly in her own, "There is my mother," said she to Nelson, with a look which would have softened marble; "and you, Nelson, what will you be to me?"—"I, madam? Your good friend."—"My good friend! that is charming! then I shall be your good friend too! Give me only that name."—"Yes, my good friend, my dear Coraly, your frankness delights me." "My God," said he to his sister, "what a beautiful girl! She will be the delight of your life." "Yes, if she is not the misery of your's," replied the provident sister. Nelson smiled with disdain. "No," said he, "love never disputes in my soul the rights of sacred friendship. Be easy, sister, and employ yourself in peace, in the care of cultivating this beautiful innocent. Blandford will be enchanted with her, if, at his return, she is mistress of our language. For we may perceive in her ideas, shadows of sentiment, which she is unhappy at not being able to express. Her eyes, her gestures, her features, every thing about her proclaims ingenious thoughts, which
only

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only want words to call them forth. This, sister, will be an amusement to you, and you will see her mind open like a flower."—"Yes, my brother, as a flower with a multitude of thorns."

Lady Albury constantly gave English lessons to her pupil, and the latter rendered them every day more interesting, by intermingling with them strokes of sentiment of a vivacity and delicacy which belongs only to pure nature. It was a triumph to her but to make discovery of a word, which expressed any gentle affection of the soul. She made the most natural, the most touching applications of them. Nelson arrived; she flew to him, and repeated her lesson to him with a joy and simplicity, which yet he found only amusing. Juliet alone saw the danger, and wanted to prevent it.

In proportion as the moral ideas increased in the young Indian's mind, she lost her gaiety, and natural ingenuousness. Every new institution seemed to her a new fetter. "Another duty!" said she. "Another prohibition! My soul is enveloped as with a net, they are going soon to render it immoveable." That they made a crime of what was hurtful, Coraly comprehended without difficulty; but she could not imagine any harm in what did no harm to any body. "What greater happiness in living together," said she, "than to see one another with pleasure? And why conceal from ourselves so sweet an impression? Is not pleasure a blessing? Why then hide it from the person who occasions it? They pretend to feel it with those whom they do not love, and to feel none with those whom they do! Some enemy of truth devised these manners."

Reflections of this sort plunged her into melancholy; and when Juliet reproached her with it, "you know the cause of it," said she: "every thing that

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is contrary to nature must make me sorrowful, and in your manners every thing is contrary to nature."

Coral, in her little impatiences, had something so soft and touching, that lady Albury accused herself of afflicting her by too much rigour. Her manner of consoling her, and of restoring to her good humour, was by employing her in little services, and by commanding her as her child. The pleasure of thinking that she was useful, flattered her sensibly: she foresaw the instant, in order to seize it; but the same attentions that she paid to Juliet, she wanted to pay to Nelson, and they distressed her by moderating her zeal.

Nelson himself seemed sometimes confused at the trouble she took. "You are very vain then," said she to him, "since you blush at having need of me! I am not so proud as you: serve me; I shall be flattered with it."

All these strokes of an ingenuous and sensible soul, made lady Albury uneasy. "I tremble," said she to Nelson, when they were alone, "I tremble, lest she love you, and lest that love occasions her unhappiness." He took this hint for an injury to innocence. "See there now," said he, "how the abuse of words alters and displaces ideas. Coral loves me, I know it; but she loves me as you do. Is there any thing more natural than to attach one's-self to the person who does us good? Is it a fault in this girl, if the tender and lively expression of a sentiment so just, and so laudable, is prophaned in our manners? Whatever criminality we affix to it, has it ever come into her thought?"—"No, brother, you do not understand me. Nothing more innocent than her love for you; but..."—"But, sister, why suppose, why want it to be love? It is true and pure friendship for me, which she has for you likewise."—"You persuade

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suade yourself, Nelson, that ~~it~~ is the same sentiment; will you make trial of it? Let us have the appearance of separating, and of reducing her to the choice of quitting the one or the other."—"Silence, and a serious air, Coraly comes; now you shall hear."

"What is the matter now," said Coraly, on coming up to them? "Nelson in one corner! Juliet in the other! Are you displeased?" "We have just taken," said Juliet to her, "a resolution which afflicts us; but there was a necessity of coming to it. We are no longer to live together; each of us is to have a house of their own; and we are agreed to leave you the choice."

At these words, Coraly viewed Juliet with eyes immoveable, with sorrow and astonishment. "It is I," said she, "that am the cause of your wanting to quit Nelson. You are displeased that he loves me; you are jealous of the pity which a young orphan inspires him with. Alas! what will you not envy, if you envy pity; if you envy her who loves you, and who would give her life for you, the only valuable thing which is left her? You are unjust, my lady, yes, you are unjust. Your brother in loving me, loves not you less, and if it were possible he would love you more, for my sentiments would pass into his soul, and I have nothing to inspire into him towards you but complaisance and love."

Juliet would fain have persuaded her, that she and Nelson parted good friends. "It is impossible," said she. "You made it your delight to live together. And since when is it become necessary that you should have two houses? People who love one another are never put to straits; distance pleases only those who hate each other." "You, O heaven! You to hate," resumed she! "And who will love, if two hearts, so good, so virtuous, do not. It is I, wretch as I am,

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that have brought trouble into the house of peace. I will banish myself from it: yes, I beseech you, send me back into my own country. I shall there find souls sensible to my misfortune and to my tears, who will not make it a crime in me to inspire a little pity."

Coraly heard, every day, of vessels sailing for her country. She resolved to embark, without taking leave of Juliet. Only one evening, on going to bed, Juliet perceived that, in kissing her hand, her lips pressed her more tenderly than usual, and that some profound sighs escaped her. "She leaves me more moved than ever before," said Juliet alarmed. "Her eyes are fixed on mine, with the most lively expression of tenderness and sorrow. What passes in her soul?" This uneasiness disturbed her the whole night, and the next morning she sent to know if Coraly was not yet up. They told her that she was gone out, alone, and in a very plain dress, and that she had taken the way to the water-side. Lady Albury gets up in distress, and orders them to go in pursuit of the Indian. They find her on board a vessel, begging her passage, environed by sailors, whom her beauty, her graces, her youth, the sound of her voice, and, above all, the native simplicity of her request, ravished with surprise and admiration. She had nothing with her, but bare necessaries. Every thing they had given her which was valuable, she had left behind, excepting a little heart of chrystal, which she had received from Nelson.

At the name of lady Albury, she submitted without resistance, and suffered herself to be reconveyed home. She appeared before her a little confused at her elopement; but to her reproaches she answered, that she was unhappy and free.—"What, my dear Coraly! do you see nothing here but unhappiness?"

"If

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“ If I saw here only my own,” said she, “ I should never leave you. It is Nelson’s unhappiness that frights me, and it is for his peace that I would fly.”

Juliet knew not what to reply : she durst not talk to her of the rights which Blanford had acquired over her : this would have been to make her hate him, as the cause of her unhappiness. She chose rather to lessen her fears. “ I could not conceal from you,” said she to her, “ all the danger of a fruitless love : but the evil is not without remedy. Six months of absence, reason, friendship, how can we tell? Another object, perhaps.—” The Indian interrupted her. “ Say death : there is my only remedy. What ! will reason cure me of loving the most accomplished, the most worthy of men ? Will six months of absence give me a soul that loves him not ? Does time change nature ? Friendship will pity me : but will it cure me ? Another object !—You do not think so. You do not do me that injustice. There are not two Nelson’s in the world ; but though there were a thousand, I have but one heart ; that is given away. No, my lady, you talk to no purpose : you throw clouds over my understanding ; you shed not the least light on it. Let me see and hear Nelson : he shall decide upon my life.”

Lady Albury, in the most cruel perplexity, seeing the unhappy Coraly withering and pining in tears, and begging to be suffered to depart, resolved to write to Nelson, that he might come and dissuade the poor girl from her design of returning to India, and preserve her from that disgust of life which daily consumed her. But Nelson was not less to be pitied. Scarce had he quitted Coraly, but he perceived the danger of seeing her, by the repugnance which he had to leave her. All that had appeared only play to him with her, became serious, on being deprived of her.

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In the silence of solitude, he had interrogated his soul: he had found there friendship languishing, zeal for the public good weakened, nay almost extinguished, and love alone ruling there, with that sweet and terrible sway which he exercises over good hearts. He perceived, with horror, that his very reason had suffered itself to be seduced. The rights of Blanford were no longer so sacred; and the involuntary crime of depriving him of Coraly's heart, was at least very excusable; after all, the Indian was free, and Blanford himself would not have wished to impose it on her as a duty to be his.

In the mean time Coraly's image pursued him perpetually. If he had only seen her with all her charms, arrayed in simple beauty, bearing in her countenance the serenity of innocence, the smile of candour on her lips, the fire of desire in her eyes, and in all the graces of her person the attracting air of voluptuousness, he would have found in his principles, in the severity of his manners, sufficient force to withstand seduction: but he thought he saw that amiable girl as sensible as himself, more feeble, with no other defence than a prudence which was not her own, innocently abandoning herself to an inclination which would be her unhappiness; and the pity which she inspired him with, served as fuel to his love. Nelson blamed himself for loving Coraly, but forgave himself for pitying her. Sensible of the evils which he was on the point of being the cause of, he could not paint to himself her ears, without thinking of the fine eyes which were to shed them, and the heaving bosom which they would bedew: thus the resolution of forgetting her, rendered her still dearer to him. He attached himself to her by enouncing her; but in proportion as he perceived himself weaker, he became more courageous. "Let me give over," said he, "the thoughts of a cure: I exhaust

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exhaust myself in fruitless efforts. It is a fit which I must suffer to go off. I burn, I languish, I die; but all this is mere suffering, and I am answerable to nobody but myself for what passes within. Provided nothing escape me from without, that discovers my passion, my friend has no reason to complain. It is only a misfortune to be weak; and I have the courage to be unhappy."

It was in this resolution of dying, rather than betraying his friendship, that he received the letter from his sister. He read it with an emotion, an extacy that was inexpressible.

At Nelson's arrival, Coraly, trembling and confused, scarce dared present herself to him. She had wished his return with ardour, and at seeing him, a mortal chillness glided through her veins. She appeared, as it were, before a judge who was preparing, with one single word, to decide her fate.

What were Nelson's feelings, on seeing the roses of youth faded on her beautiful cheeks, and the fire of her eyes almost extinguished! "Come," said Juliet to her brother, "appease the mind of this poor girl, and cure her of her melancholy. She is eaten up with the vapours with me; she wants to return to India."

Nelson, speaking to her, in a friendly manner, wanted to engage her, by gentle reproaches, to explain herself before his sister; but Coraly kept silence; and Juliet, perceiving that she was a restraint upon her, went away.

Sobs interrupted her voice; and Nelson, who saw her choaked with them, had not even time to call his sister. He hastens to untie the ribbands which bound her bosom; and then all the charms of youth in its flower were unveiled to the eyes of this passionate lover. The terror with which he was seized, rendered him at first insensible of them; but when the Indian

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resumed her spirits, and perceiving herself pressed in his arms, thrilled with love and transport, and when on opening her fine languishing eyes, she sought the eyes of Nelson; "heavenly powers," said he, "support me! all my virtue abandons me. Live, my dear Coraly."—"Would you that I should live, Nelson! would you then that I love you?"—"No, I should be perjured to friendship, I should be unworthy to see the light; unworthy of seeing my friend again. Alas! he fortold me this, and I vouchsafed not to believe him. I have presumed too much on my own heart. Have pity of it, Coraly, of that heart which you rend to pieces. Suffer me to fly you, and to subdue myself." "Ah! you would have my death," said she to him, falling into a fit at his feet. Nelson, who thinks he sees what he loves expiring, rushes to embrace her, and restraining himself suddenly at the sight of Juliet, "my sister," said he, "assist her: it is for me to die." On saying these words he withdraws.

"Where is he," demanded Coraly, on opening her eyes? "What have I done to him? Why fly me? And you, Juliet, more cruel still, why recall me to life?" Her sorrow redoubled when she learned that Nelson was just gone; but reflection gave her a little hope and courage. The concern and tenderness which Nelson had not been able to conceal, the terror with which she had seen him seized, the tender words which had escaped him, and the violence which it was to him to subdue himself and withdraw, all persuaded her that she was beloved. "If it be true," said she, "I am unhappy. Blanford will return, I will confess the whole to him; he is too just and too generous to want to tyrannize over me." But this illusion was soon dissipated.

Nelson received in the country a letter from his friend, announcing his return. "I hope," said he, "at the end of his letter, to see myself, in three days,

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united to all that I love. Pardon, my friend, if I associate to thee in my heart the amiable and tender Coraly. My soul was a long time sorely devoted to thee, now she partakes of it. I have confided to thee the sweetest of my wishes, and I have seen friendship applaud love. I form my happiness, both of one and the other ; I make it my felicity to think that by thy cares, and those of thy sister, I shall see my dear pupil again, her mind ornamented with new acquirements, her soul enriched with new virtues, more amiable if possible, and more disposed to love. It will be the purest bliss to me to possess her as a benefit conferred by you."

"Read this letter," writ Nelson to his sister, "and make Coraly read it. What a lesson for me! What a reproach to her!"

"It is over," said Coraly after having read, "I shall never be Nelson's ; but let him not ask me to be another's. The liberty of loving is a good which I am not able to renounce." This resolution supported her ; and Nelson in his solitude was much more unhappy than she.

"By what fatality," said she, "is it, that what forms the charm of nature and the delight of all hearts, the happiness of being loved, forms my torment? What say I? Of being loved? That is nothing; but to be loved of what I love! To touch on happiness! To have only to deliver myself up to it!--Ah! all that I am able to do, is to fly: inviolable and sacred friendship asks no more. In what a condition have I seen this poor girl! In what a condition did I abandon her! She may well say, that she is the slave of my virtues. I sacrifice her as a victim, and I am generous at her expence. There are then virtues which wound nature ; and to be honest, one is sometimes obliged to be unjust and cruel! O, my friend! mayest thou

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thou gather the fruit of the efforts which it costs me, enjoy the good which I resign to thee, and live happy from my misfortune. Yes, I wish that she may love thee ; I wish it, heaven is my witness ; and the most sensible of all my pains is that of doubting the success of my wishes."

It was impossible for nature to support herself in a state so violent. Nelson, after long struggles, sought repose ; alas ! there was no more repose for him. His constancy was at last exhausted, and his discouraged soul fell into a mortal languor. The weakness of his reason, the inefficacy of his virtue, the image of a painful and sorrowful life, the void and the state of annihilation, into which his soul would fall, if it ceased to love Coraly, the evils without intermission which he was to suffer if he continued to love her, and, above all, the terrifying idea of seeing, of envying, of hating, perhaps, a rival in his faithful friend, all rendered his life a torment to him, all urged him to shorten the course of it. Motives more strong restrained him. It was not a part of Nelson's principles that a man, a citizen, might dispose of himself. He made it a law to himself to live, consoled in his misery if he could still be useful to the world, but consumed with heaviness and sorrow, and became as it were insensible to every thing.

The time appointed for Blanford's return approached. It was necessary that every thing should be so disposed as to conceal from him the mischief which his absence had occasioned ; and who should determine Coraly to conceal it but Nelson ? He returned therefore to London ; but languishing, dejected, to such a degree as not to be known. The sight of him overwhelmed Juliet with grief, and what impression did it not make on the soul of Coraly ! Nelson took upon him to re-encourage them ; but that very effort
only

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only served to complete his own dejection. The slow fever which consumed him, redoubled; he was forced to give way to it; and this furnished occasion for a new contest between his sister and the young Indian. The latter would not quit Nelson's pillow. She urgently entreated them to accept of her care and attendance. They kept her out of the way from pity to herself, and for the sake of sparing him; but she tasted not the repose which they meant to procure her. Every moment of the night they found her wandering round the apartment of the diseased, or motionless on the threshold of his door, with tears in her eyes, her soul on her lips, her ear attentive to the slightest noises, every one of which congealed her with fear.

At last they inform her that Blanford is landed; and Nelson, enfeebled and faint as he is, goes to receive and embrace him at the harbour. Blanford, on seeing him, could not conceal his astonishment and his uneasiness. "Courage, man," said Nelson: "I have been very ill; but my health is returning. I see you again, and joy is a balm which will soon revive me. I am not the only one whose health has suffered by **your** absence. Your pupil is a little changed: the air of our climate may contribute to it. As to the rest, she has made a great progress: her understanding, her talents have unfolded themselves, and if the kind of languor into which she is fallen vanishes, you will possess what is pretty uncommon, a woman, in whom nature has left nothing wanting."

Blanford, therefore, was not surprised to find Coraly weak and languishing; but he was much affected at it.

It was settled, that in less than a week Coraly should be married to Blanford. In the mean time, she remained with Juliet, and Nelson never quitted her. But his courage was exhausted in supporting
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the young Indian's. To be perpetually constrained to suppress his own tears, to dry up those of a fond girl, who sometimes distressed at his feet, sometimes fainting and falling into his arms, conjured him to have pity on her, without allowing one moment to his own weakness, and without ceasing to recall to his mind his cruel resolution, this trial appears above the strength of nature : accordingly Nelson's virtue abandoned him every moment. But Blanford's presence was still more painful to them. He came every day to converse with them, not on the barren topics of love, but the care he took, that every thing in his house should breathe cheerfulness and ease, that every thing there should forestall the desires of his wife, and contribute to her happiness. "If I die without children," said he, "the half of my wealth is her's, the other half is his, who, after me, shall know how to please and to console her for having lost me. That, Nelson, is your place ; there is no growing old in my profession : take my place when I shall be no more. I have not the odious pride of wanting my wife to continue faithful to my shade. Coraly is formed to embellish the world, and to enrich nature with the fruits of her fecundity."

It is more easy to conceive than describe the situation of our two lovers. Their concern and confusion were the same in both ; but it was a kind of consolation to Nelson to see Coraly in such worthy hands, whereas Blandford's favours and love were an additional torment to her. On losing Nelson, she would have preferred the desertion of all nature, to the cares, the favours, the love of all the world beside. It was decided, however, even with the consent of this unfortunate girl, that there was no longer time to hesitate, and that it was necessary she should submit to her fate.

She

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She was led then as a victim to that house, which she had cherished as her first asylum, but which she now dreaded as her grave. Blanford received her there as sovereign ; and what she could not conceal of the violent state of her soul, he attributes to timidity, to the concern which, at her age, the approach of marriage inspires.

Nelson had summoned up all the strength of a stoical soul, in order to present himself at this festival with a serene countenance.

They read the settlement which Blanford had made. It was, from one end to the other, a monument of love, esteem, and beneficence. Tears flowed from every eye, even from Coraly's.

Blanford approaches respectfully, and stretching out his hand to her, "Come," said he, "my best beloved, give to this pledge of your fidelity, to this title of the happiness of my life, the inviolable sanctity with which it is to be cloathed."

Coraly, on doing herself the utmost violence, had scarce strength to advance, and put her hand to the pen. At the instant she would have signed, her eyes were covered with a mist ; her whole body was seized with a sudden trembling ; her knees bent under her, and she was upon the point of falling, if Blanford had not supported her. Shocked, congealed with fear, he looks at Nelson, and sees him with the paleness of death on his countenance. Lady Albury had ran up to Coraly, in order to assist her : "O heaven," cries Blanford, "what is it that I see ! Sorrow, death surround me. What was I going to do ? What have you concealed from me ? Ah ! my friend, could it be possible ! See the light again, my dear Coraly, I am not cruel, I am not unjust ; I wish only for your happiness."

The women who surrounded Coraly, exerted themselves to revive her ; and decency obliged Nelson and
Blan-

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Blanford to keep at a distance. But Nelson remained immoveable, with his eyes fixed on the ground, like a criminal. Blanford comes up to him, and clasps him in his arms. "Am I no longer thy friend?" said he; "Art thou not still the half of myself? Open thy heart to me, and tell me what has passed.—No, tell me nothing: I know all. This poor girl could not see thee, hear thee, and live with thee, without loving thee. She has sensibility, she has been touched with thy goodness, and thy virtues. Thou hast condemned her to silence, thou hast required of her the most grievous sacrifice. Ah! Nelson, had it been accomplished, what a misfortune! Just heaven would not permit it; nature, to whom thou did violence, has resumed her rights. Do not afflict thyself: it is a crime which she has spared thee. Yes, the devotion of Coraly was the crime of friendship." "I confess it," replied Nelson, throwing himself at his knees: "I have been the innocent cause of thy unhappiness, of my own, and that of this amiable girl; but I call fidelity, friendship, honour, to witness——" "No oaths," interrupted Blanford: "they wrong us both." "Go, my friend," continued he, raising him, thou wouldest not be in my arms, if I had been able to suspect thee of a shameful perfidy. What I foresaw is come to pass, but without thy consent. What I have just now seen is a proof of it, and that very proof is unnecessary: thy friend has no need of it." "It is certain," replied Nelson, "that I have nothing to reproach myself, but my presumption and imprudence. But that is enough, and I shall be punished for it. Coraly will not be thine, but I will not be her's."—"Is it thus that you answer a generous friend?" replied Blanford to him, in a firm and grave tone of voice. "Do you think yourself obliged to observe childish punctilios with me? Coraly shall not be mine, because
because

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because she would not be happy with me. But an honest man for a husband, whom but for you she would have loved, is a loss to her, of which you are the cause; and which you must repair. The contract is drawn up, they shall change the names; but I insist that the articles remain. What I meant to give Coraly as a husband, I now give her as a father. Nelson, make me not blush by an humiliating refusal."—"I am confounded, and not surprized," said Nelson, "at this generosity which overpowers me. I must subscribe to it with confusion, and revere it in silence. If I knew not how well respect reconciles itself to friendship, I should no longer dare to call you my friend."

During this conversation Coraly had recovered, and again saw with terror the light which was restored to her. But what was her surprize, and the revolution which was suddenly wrought in her soul! "All is known, all is forgiven," said Nelson, embracing her, "fall at the feet of our benefactor: from his hand I receive your's." Coraly would have been profuse in her acknowledgements. "You are a child," said Blanford to her: "you should have told me every thing. Let us talk no more of it; but let us never forget that there are trials, to which virtue itself would do well not to expose herself."



THE FATAL ADOPTION.

A Lady of a noble family in Scotland, who in the year 1715 was compelled to leave her native country, by reason of her husband's attachment to the pretender's

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pretender's party, retired to St. Germain's in France, where her husband died soon after. The old chevalier behaved very kindly to her ; but being incapable of properly supporting all those unhappy fugitives, whose blind zeal had rendered outcasts of their maternal isle, she was in great distress, having three sons to educate and maintain. A dreadful perspective opened to her view, and she was meditating upon her unhappy fate, when a widow lady, who had no children of her own, residing near the palace, and possessing an ample fortune, remitted her a very considerable sum of money, and gave her to understand, that if she would part with the youngest of her sons, who was not above two years old, she would take upon herself his education. This lady had seen the child, who was remarkably handsome and engaging, and she had often wished that she had been blessed with such an amiable pledge of her former love.

The mother was easily persuaded to let her have the child, as she was convinced from her general behaviour that she could do much better by him than herself was able. The boy was accordingly put into her hands, and it was agreed with the mother that this lady should adopt him for her own son. The lady's tenderness and affection daily increased for the child, and she continued bringing him up with this intent.

In the mean while a relation of the Scottish lady's died in England, and having bequeathed her a considerable legacy, it was necessary that she should make her personal appearance there, in order to receive it. She accordingly set out for Great-Britain, with her two eldest sons, leaving her youngest in the hands of this affectionate lady, with the prospect of an ample fortune.

The

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The first impressions he had received in his infancy were not difficult to remove: he soon forgot that he was born in Scotland, and the assiduity of his mother by adoption, in placing him early at a college in Paris, entirely eradicated the remembrance of his origin. He there went through his studies in the name he was entered, which was that of his benefactress, and no expence was spared for maintainance. He was taught all the proper exercises suitable to his age, with all the distinction of a young gentleman heir to a considerable fortune, and without his having the least mistrust of the change that had happened in his destiny. He imagined his benefactress to be his mother, and she had habituated herself to look upon him as her son, and finding him answer her most promising expectations, by the methods that had been taken in his education, she was resolved that he should always remain in this agreeable error.

He was already by her intercession made a musqueteer, when one of his brothers came to Paris, who failed not to perform what he thought his duty, by paying his earliest respects to this lady, who had done so many generous and good offices to the family. At this interview he learnt from her what, indeed, could not have been concealed, that his brother was living, and that he was deserving of the affection which she conceived for him. But she did not at the same time dissemble her capricious turn of mind, by adding that she had hitherto taken care to conceal from him his real family, her design being to keep him, during her life, in that delusion. That to counterbalance this deception, she had not only resolved to behave in every respect like a mother to him, but to bequeath him the succession of all her fortune; that he already bore her name and arms; that he believed himself destined by nature to be her heir, and that the

the force of custom had habituated him to pay her every filial respect and attention ; that the illusion was so agreeable to her, if ever it should be destroyed she should consider it as the greatest misfortune that could happen to her ; that she would not even answer for the continuance of her former dispositions, if by undeceiving her dear son, he should slacken his regard and duty towards her, by perhaps paying them to another ; and that it was therefore of the utmost consequence to both of them that he should remain in the state of innocence wherein he had been educated ; and therefore she intreated, either through favour or justice, to be indulged at least till her death ; and concluded by telling him that his brother's future fate and fortune were now in his hands.

This was too favourite a topic for her not soon after to resume. " Truth and honour, said she, will not allow me to deny you, that I could wish all the world were equally ignorant as himself, with respect to his birth ; but you will be his destruction if, by communicating to him what I have just been saying to you, I am robbed of any part of that pleasure which I take in concealing it from him. Consider well your conduct ; for I have such delicate notions upon this head as will never suffer me to put up with appearances, or be imposed upon by deception."

However extravagant these notions appeared to the Scotch gentleman, he thought himself obliged to reply, that she required nothing but what she had a right to expect ; and having a strong desire to see his brother, he protested that every thing she had been pleased to make him the confidant of, should remain for ever a profound secret, if she thought proper. After this promise she did not hesitate informing him, that his brother was a musqueteer, and that he might see him at Paris. If indeed the regard he had for his
brother

brother did not weigh with him to destroy the musqueteer's fortune, his own personal interest would have induced him to have kept the secret. He sat out with full resolution of being silent, no way mistrusting his own discretion, and ruminating, anticipated the pleasure he should have in playing so uncommon a character as he was going to exhibit. His impatience did not let him long postpone his desired satisfaction. Almost as soon as he arrived at Paris he obtained it; and accident was so much his friend, that instead of having only the pleasure of seeing his brother, as he proposed, he supped with him the very first night, being introduced by an Irish officer who had an intimacy at the hotel of the musqueteer.

If it was at first excited by nothing but curiosity to keep his eyes constantly fixed upon the musqueteer, he was soon sensible that the force of nature was still stronger, which recalled his attention against his will. During the whole night he could not one instant withdraw his eyes from a face whose every feature awakened in his heart some tender sentiment. His brother, on his side, was secretly agitated by the same power; but this he at first imputed to that embarrassment which the constant attention of a stranger must naturally create; but finding it increase with a kind of prejudice in favour of this very stranger, he could not account for it; and he at length concluded it to be one of those sympathetic *penchants* which sometimes influence the heart, and which dispose us to esteem those we are unacquainted with.

They retired with a strong inclination of meeting again. The musqueteer was the more solicitous for it, as he knew of no measures that were to be kept; and therefore the next day he desired the Irish officer, who had introduced this agreeable companion, to make them better acquainted. Thus, then, they kept

kept each other's company, whilst their mutual inclination daily increased, and they at length became almost inseparable; in a word, they were for some months the *Castor* and *Pollux* of Paris, and, as a constellation, attracted the attention of all inquisitive beholders. The ill-natured world began to reason with respect to a friendship that so much resembled a passion. At a time when such familiarities and affection were not always founded in innocence, some slanderous tongues chose to brand their connection with an unnatural stigma. Such at least was the pretext of the elder brother for having revealed the secret. Moreover, he had no reason to suspect that his indiscretion would have been so fatal to the musqueteer; and those who upbraid him with weakness, do not however pronounce him criminal for yielding to the impulse of his natural feelings.

The musqueteer was one day expressing his surprize at the strong inclination he had of constantly being with his unknown brother, and at his great propensity for loving him; it was now that the elder brother could no longer withhold the secret from him, or refrain from embracing him with tenderness, at the same time substituting the word brother for friend. He nevertheless immediately subjoined all the reasons which should induce both of them to act with caution in this respect, in imparting to him the discourse which had passed between him and the musqueteer's supposed mother; and concluding with intimating his fears that she might behave to her adopted son in the manner she had threatened, if she perceived the least relaxation on his side with respect to tenderness and affection.

Whatever emotions the musqueteer felt in his breast upon this discovery, he promised, however, to keep within such bounds as were prescribed him; and they then

then settled in what manner they should behave. To pay respect and regard to an amiable generous lady, could not appear a very difficult task, which they agreed, by oath, never to swerve from. Indeed the testimonies which she expected, were such as could no way embarrass any young gentleman well brought up, as his own disposition, without compulsion, would have induced him to offer them.

But the danger lay on another side. The idea of a mother, whom he had never seen, and who incessantly recurred to his mind under every attracting form, greatly disturbed his tranquillity. The desire of seeing her became an insupportable torment to him. He opened his mind to his brother upon this head, who painted to him in lively colours, his apprehensions, exhorting him to gain more empire over his sentiments ; but this counsel was not attended to. Even the frustration of all his hopes did not appear to him as an evil that should divert his design : but this he thought could never be the case, as he did not imagine that she, who was as he thought solely actuated by generosity in all that she had done for him, could never be offended to see him give way to those sentiments which were as just as they were natural, especially when he should solemnly declare to her they should no way affect those which she had a right to expect from him. His brother exerted all his endeavours to make him lay aside his thought, but in vain ; he sat out with the design of opening his heart to his benefactress, and to entreat her to allow him to make a voyage to England.

He was received by her with the usual marks of affection. She had no suspicion of any thing that had passed ; and her affection for this dear son was now at its summit. He had, nevertheless, scarce began to explain himself, ere she discovered what he was going upon.

upon. Her indignation was fired that to degree, that it eclipsed all her other sentiments. "They have ruined you, said she, interrupting him, I from this moment cease to be your mother, since you're no longer ignorant whose son you are. Go back to those who have done you this kind office, and never appear again in my sight." So great was her jealousy, that, upon saying these last words, she immediately retired to her closet, where she locked herself in all alone, without listening a moment to the prayers and intreaties of the youth. He at length concluded that his reasoning had deceived him; but the evil which he began to dread affecting him far less than what he thought the duty he owed to nature, he resolved rather to renounce his claims to fortune, than to give up those obligations which he thought incumbent on a youth of family, who should consider nothing so dear as those who gave him breath. This resolution did not, however, prevent the renewal of his endeavours to soften a heart whose affection he considered as placed in the first rank after that he bore his real mother. He was beloved by the servants, who had been accustomed to treat him like their master; so that by their assistance he gained admittance into the lady's apartment, notwithstanding the rigorous injunctions she had laid upon her attendants to the contrary. At the sight of him she was upon the point of flying from the room he entered; but he threw himself at her feet, and interrupted her passage.

This was a most uncommon scene; jealousy, affection, and rage, by turns animated her. However it at length ended in a kind of composition on both sides. The lady promised to continue her friendship towards him, and to forget the offence he had given her, on condition that he would engage not to go to England, and never to call the Scotch lady (whom she

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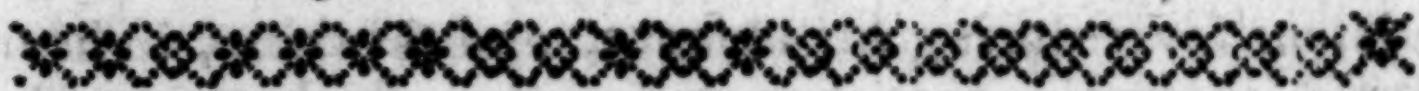
she considered as her rival) mother in her presence. On this part the musqueteer gave his word, but in the most equivocal terms, to obey in every thing the lady whom he should love all his life-time as his mother, and never to undertake any thing that might give her the least uneasiness. He placed his hope in escaping by this mental reservation, and to find some favourable opportunity of going secretly to England.

Peace being restored by this happy treaty, some months elapsed whilst he was concerting his measures to make a secret voyage to England; and he put them in execution at the time the court was at Fontainebleau, when he obtained leave of absence for three weeks, without any one of his friends having the least suspicion of his departure. In fine, fate, who had decreed that he should not inherit this lady's fortune, resolved that his benefactress should be taken ill of a violent fever during his absence, and thinking, in her lucid intervals, that her end approached, she most ardently wished to see him. He was accordingly wrote to, but the letters never reached him; equally fruitless was the search made after him, till it was at length discovered by some of the officers of the corps, that he was gone over to England.

This news, which was too inadvertently related to his benefactress, no sooner reached her than it threw her into the most violent agonies, in which she expired, revoking her former will in her adopted son's favour, considering him as the most ungrateful of human beings, and leaving her whole fortune to a convent.

The mind of the unfortunate musqueteer was greatly agitated at this unexpected stroke; every thing now seemed to ruffle him, though the real source of his uneasiness was in his own breast, there engendered by his adopted mother's cruelty and revenge. As

he could not brook an affront, he was always cautious of giving one; but his disposition now was inclined to construe the slightest insinuation into insult, and being in company where his own story was told by another officer, who did not know him, it was considered by him as so great an outrage upon decency, that he immediately called the officer out, when drawing, his antagonist fell in the conflict. It was necessary for the musqueteer to make a precipitate escape, and he flew to England, where he soon found himself destitute of money or protection, and his expectations from the summit of fortune were reduced to the mean necessity of imploring the benevolence of those, who, because they were richer, fancied themselves greater than he.



THE GOOD WIFE.

ENJOY, madam, all the satisfactions of your house and family; but concern yourself with none of the cares of them; only perform the honours, and indulge in every delight they can afford.— Thus for the space of eight years past, had the ostentatious Melidor incessantly talked to his wife Acelia. No doubt such advice was of a nature sufficiently agreeable: accordingly the young and lively Acelia observed it most punctually. But reflection at length arrived with maturity of age, and that fascination being dissolved, which had so long possessed her mind, her eyes were at last opened to the truth.

Melidor

Melidor had the misfortune to be born in the midst of opulence; educated among the young noblesse, invested with a considerable post at his first entrance into life; master of great wealth from the infancy of reason; all together engaged him in a youth of folly: the most prevailing of his foibles was to live like a man of quality: he made himself familiar among the great; he studied their manners with attention; and as the noble and graceful heir of a real man of fashion is not easy to acquire, he was caught with the manners of some humble imitators of it; and on supposition that they were finished models of excellence, he applied himself to copy their affections. From that moment he would have esteemed it a disgrace not to be able to say, my manors and vassals. He therefore employed the chief part of his wealth, in the purchase of estates, and of such principally, whereof the rents were inconsiderable, although the style and rights belonging to them sounded pompously. He had heard say, that great men had always stewards who defrauded them, creditors who dunned them, and kept mistresses who were common to all. Accordingly Melidor thought it beneath him, either to inspect his own accounts, or to pay his own debts, or to be delicate in his amours. Scarce had his eldest son attained to seven years, before Melidor's dignity required to provide him a tutor; a tutor therefore was provided, and one as opinionated as empty, whose sole merit consisted in making a graceful bow. This tutor was a creature of a servile flatterer, who besieged Melidor, called Duranson, whose extract was as low as his behaviour was insolent; he was a kind of cur, that growled at every passenger, and fawned upon nobody except his own master: his really selfish character he concealed under the garb of a misanthrope, full of arrogance and ill humour. Being rich and yet covetous, he found it a great con-

venience to have a good house over his head, which he never bought; and all kind of pleasures, for which another paid: being first a silent and sly observer of all that passed, he was seen afterwards, when enthroned in his great chair, to decide concerning all in a few authoritative words, and erect himself into a domestic censor. Unhappy was it for any man of worth to approach, who was not also a man of sufficient power to make himself dreaded: his character was sure to be mangled without mercy, although nothing more than his air chanced to displease Duranson. Melidor mistook the ill humours of his friend for philosophy: he knew, that he himself was exalted by Duranson into a hero; and the incense of a man of that character seemed a delicious perfume: although in reality a gross flatterer, yet he had too much craft to expose himself in public: if he applauded Melidor publickly, it was only by a wink or a smile; he reserved his coarse commendations for a *tete à tete*, and then he bestowed on Melidor enough to surfeit him. It was not without difficulty that Melidor could believe himself possessed of such distinguished merit; but he assuredly thought, that he could not be altogether destitute of it, since his friend Duranson was never reputed by the world to be a flatterer.

To please the husband only was a small affair; Duranson had also persuaded himself, that he should be able to seduce the young wife: He began by speaking handsomely of her alone, and unhandsomely of all others of her own age and situation: but Acelia was as little pleased with his satires as with his adulation. On this Duranson began to suspect, she held him in contempt: since flattery did not succeed, he would try the effect of fear; and accordingly, by severe and malicious insinuations, he made her feel, that it depended only upon his own mere will and pleasure, if he was not mischiev-

mischievous at the expence of even Acelia herself. But this scheme succeeded no better than the former. — I may have follies, said Acelia to him resolutely, and I ought to permit the world to expose them; but at a little further distance, if you please, from my own house: an everlasting censurer at my table is as disgusting to me as a servile flatterer. Duranson perceived by her tone and manner, that before he could hope to reduce her, he must lay some more crafty plot, and take a larger compass to accomplish it. I must try, said he, to render my assistance needful to her; I'll first reduce her to affliction, that she may be forced to have recourse to me for consolation; when her vanity and spirit shall be hurt by misfortune, they will deliver her up defenceless: I may then seize upon that favourable moment, when pride shall view the prospect of humiliation: the confidant to a woman humbled by calamity becomes oftentimes a successful avenger of her wrongs.

I am extremely sorry madam, said he, on your account; and I think it incumbent on me not to conceal the truth in an affair which afflicts me sensibly. Melidor's affections seem to have been variable for some time past; he commits follies abroad; and if he continues such injustice towards you, he must no longer expect the countenance of such a sincere friend as myself. Whether it was from inattention or dissimulation towards a man, whom Acelia had no cause to esteem, she received this information without manifesting any signs of being affected by it. — He persisted in the truth of what he had said; made much of his own zeal for her service; declaimed against the caprices and irregularities of modern husbands; said that he himself had more than once made Melidor ashamed of his conduct; and then contrasting the native charms of Acelia with those fictitious allurements

which seduced her husband, he entered with so much warmth into the subject, that he overshot the mark, and betrayed his own counsels. Acelia smiled with contempt at the awkwardness of the impostor.

There! said she, this is something like a true friend; and not like those false flatterers, whom vice retains in her service, in order to accomplish any base purpose whatever. I now rest assured of the truth of what you say; particularly of your charging Melidor to his face with all that you have now related to me.—Indeed, madam, I have told him all this, and much more.—No doubt then, sir, you will have the courage to repeat it, to reproach him again before my face, to overwhelm him with his wrongs toward me.—What! before you madam! Ah! madam! avoid any noise about such a matter; this would be losing him beyond recovery: he is of a haughty spirit; it would hurt his pride to be thus put to shame before your face: he would consider me as a perfidious friend, and moreover who can tell to what secret motive his suspicion may impute our conduct?—Never fear; I am determined to convict him openly, and to oppose to him by means of your friendly zeal such a testimony, as cannot be evaded.—But, madam; consider, madam, it will certainly be the ruin of your happiness. It is by dissembling her wrongs, that a woman reigns. Softness, gentle management, and your personal charms; these, madam, are your advantages, by these you lead us as you please. Reproaches, complaints and bitterness only irritate men the more; and of all the means to reclaim them, the very worst is to confound them with the open truth. These maxims of Duranson might be just enough, but they were urged to no purpose: Acelia would hear no reason. I know, said she, the importance of what I risk: but although it should come to an open rupture,
I am

I am resolved, that I will never by my silence complaisantly wink at my husband's vices. In vain did Duranson attempt persuasion; he was reduced even to implore, that Acelia would not thus punish his zeal, in which he had been more friendly than prudent. There's a steady friend for you! replied Acelia, there's the courage which nothing can intimidate! no, Duranson, I have no intention to upbraid my husband for his failings; I shall have a little more wit than you. But I charge you, never hereafter say any thing of your friends, which you are afraid of coming to their ears: and as to myself in particular, whatever wrongs I may receive from my husband, I require of you never to take the liberty even of mentioning them before me. Duranson, enraged at such a reception, swore to be the ruin of Acelia; but in order to this, it was necessary to involve her in the ruin of her husband.

No person at Paris has so many friends, as an opulent and prodigal man: those who frequented Melidor's house, while at table never failed to praise him to his face; but they had the civility to wait till his back was turned, before they ridiculed him: his creditors, who increased every day, were not altogether so complaisant; but his friend Duranson contrived from time to time to keep at bay the greatest part of them. I know, said he, how to cajole these fellows. Nevertheless, as they were not all equally modest, it became necessary to have recourse to ways and means for appeasing the most mutinous: and Duranson, coming to the assistance of his dear friend, lent him money on pledges at high interest in a fictitious name. The more desperate Melidor's affairs grew, the less was he inclined to converse about them. Let it be so, said he to his steward concerning whatever was proposed, I'll sign it, but let me have no

trouble. At last the steward informed him, that really he knew no longer which way to turn himself, and the effects would certainly be seized. Melidor rated his steward, and called him a rascal.—I must be whatever you please to call me, but you owe money, the money must be paid, or else your goods will be seized. In this distress Melidor again enquired of his faithful Duranson, whether he had not yet some resource behind.—Yes, sir, you have a sure one in your own power; you have only to persuade your wife to engage her fortune on your account.—True, but will she consent?—Certainly; is it possible for her to hesitate in a case, which so materially affects your honour? Nevertheless, be cautious how you alarm her: treat the affair as a trifle, as a mere matter of form in law. Melidor embraced his friend, and directly repaired to his wife's apartments.

Acelia, having been altogether occupied with the vain amusements of her sex and rank, had never the least suspicion how matters went. But fortunately, nature had blessed her with a quick discernment, and no small share of resolution. I am just come from viewing your new equipage, said her husband: it is a most elegant piece of work; your new horses too are arrived; they are gamesome, but Pifa will soon tame them; he is the best coachman in Paris. Although Acelia had been long accustomed to the most gallant behaviour from her husband; she was nevertheless highly delighted, and somewhat surprized at these new instances of it. I am afraid, said she, that I ruin you with my expences.—Ah, madam, what better use can I make of my fortune, than in whatever can be acceptable to you? Desire without reserve, and enjoy without solicitude. All my possessions are at your service, and I flatter myself that your sentiments are the same. A propos, added he negligently, I have

have some deeds to execute, wherein, for the sake of form, we shall want your signature: but we'll talk of this at night; at present concerning the colour of your coach; the varnisher waits to know your choice. I'll consider of it, replied Acelia, and let you know. But no sooner was Melidor departed, than Acelia fell into deep reflections upon the past discourse. She was a rich heiress, and the law had secured to herself and children the enjoyment of her own fortune: she saw that the proposal concerning her signature must be a matter of consequence; and that very evening, instead of going directly to the opera, she went privately to her own lawyer. But how great was her surprize, when he informed her of Melidor's situation, and that he was reduced to the most ruinous expedients to support his credit. The duration of the opera afforded her time to consult with herself: on her return home she concealed her uneasiness from the company at supper; but as soon as Melidor, in their subsequent private conversation, proposed again the signature of the papers, she then told him frankly—I will never abandon you, Melidor, if you will deign to put a confidence in me; but you must permit me to ask for a perfect confidence, and full powers to manage our family affairs according to my own discretion. Melidor was mortified at the thought of being directed by his wife: he told her, she took alarm at trifles, and he could never permit her to be fatigued with family concerns.—No, sir, it is no fatigue: I have neglected them but too much; it is a fault I will commit no more. Melidor thought his dignity did not require of him to persist any longer. Accordingly the creditors being assembled next day, gentlemen, said he, your visits are too troublesome for me; but madam here will be so good as to hear your business; endeavour to settle it with her. Gentlemen, said

Acelia, with a serious and resolute air, although the enjoyment of my fortune be secured to myself and children, I am nevertheless sensible, that it is my duty to assist their father; I am content to do it, but it shall be only in an equitable manner. All honest creditors shall receive justice at my hands; but I will never be answerable for any impositions upon the follies of a man of pleasure. Bring me to-morrow copies of all your demands. I only require time to examine them; there shall be no unnecessary delay.

As soon as Acelia saw herself at the head of affairs, she was no longer the same woman: when she looked back upon her past life, she perceived nothing therein except the tinsel of a thousand vain occupations. Are these, said she, the duties of the mother of a family? Is it thus, at the expence of one's own honour and repose, that one ought to purchase costly entertainments, fashionable equipages, and other splendid trifles? Sir, said she to Melidor, to-morrow I shall receive the state of your debts; but the state of your revenues is likewise necessary; please to direct your steward for that purpose.

The steward attended and delivered in his accounts. Nothing appeared more fair: so far from having any money in hand, he had already made considerable advances; and there was due to him twice as much as the value of his salary at accumulated interest. I see, said Acelia, that Mr. Steward understands figures better than we: it only remains to pay him his dues, and thank him, that we owe him no more. Pay him! replied Melidor: but how?—Out of my own private purse: the first step to oeconomy is to discharge the steward. No sooner was he discharged, than immediately a reform was made in the number of servants and expences—Courage, sir, said she, let us cut to the quick; we only sacrifice our vanity.—But appearances,

ances, madam.——--Appearances, sir, are best, when we no longer dissipate the goods of others, and enjoy our own without reproach.——But, madam, at discharging your domestics you pay them, and this will exhaust our only ready money.——Be easy my dear friend, I have jewels and trinkets; and in sacrificing such ornaments to your service, I shall acquire one, which is of more value than all the rest.

The next day the creditors arrived, and Acelia gave them audience. Those, of whom Melidor had purchased any superfluous curiosities, or moveables of value, consented to take them again at a reasonable discount: the others, charmed with their reception, and with Acelia's heartiness in their cause, unanimously consented to desire no other arbitrator: her conciliating manner united all opinions. One creditor only, and with a sufficiently confused face, affirmed that he could make no concessions: he had many precious effects in pawn, and the usury marked in his list amounted to an enormous sum. Acelia took him aside, in order to gain upon him if possible. At last, when touched to the quick by her expostulations; it is not, said he, on my own account, that I come here; and I could have wished, that M. Duranson had excused me from being his agent in this dirty affair.——Duranson, say you! What! is it under his name that you act?——Yes, madam, it is.——Our pledges then are in his hands——yes, undoubtedly, and likewise a note of hand from me, wherein I testify that nothing is due to me on account of the effects in question.——Pray can I have a duplicate of that note?——Yes, directly, I have one about me; here it is: for the name of a usurer is irksome to me. This was putting a weapon into the hands of Acelia: but it was not yet the time to employ it, or to come to direct war with Duranson,

Duranfon, by opening the eyes of Melidor : she thought it better to dissemble somewhat longer.

When Acelia's lawyer waited on her, he found that in twenty-four hours she had acquitted a number of debts, and put a great part of the revenues upon a footing of œconomy. This will do, said he ; you act upon secure principles. Oeconomy is the best expedient for raising money ; one grows rich in an instant with only that same income, which before was squandered in prodigality. During this conversation Melidor was afflicting himself at seeing his house despoiled of its ornaments. Ah, sir ! said Acelia, resume your spirits, I only retrench in our follies : but Melidor could not divert his thoughts from the judgments of the world, and the prospect of humiliation : he therefore retired in confusion, leaving Acelia in consultation with her lawyer. A young woman has an inconceivable advantage in the conduct of business : without going so far as by the hope and desire of pleasing to inspire men with those sensations, of which we all conceive the idea, she can interest even the most indifferent in her service ; and insensibly engage them to a certain readiness toward accommodation, of which the men are not susceptible among one another. Nature itself has prepared a kind of secret intelligence between the sexes ; every difficulty subsides, all parties mutually concur, and instead of treating each other any longer like enemies, as between man and man, they all voluntarily deliver themselves up to the conduct of a woman.

Acelia found the good effects of this disposition : her lawyer set himself about her business with such a zeal and affection, as he would have never exerted toward her husband. Madam, said he, in ballancing the estimate of Melidor's effects against the amount of his debts, I find that there is wherewithal to discharge

charge the whole : but if the effects be sold in a hurry, they must be disposed of greatly below their value. Suppose then, you leave your husband's goods at full liberty, till we can sell them to advantage : in which case they will raise the two hundred thousand crowns that he owes ; and in the mean time if you will become security for him, I can borrow for you the sum required : it will then be easy to reduce this multitude of debts standing at a ruinous interest to a smaller number of articles of a less burthensome nature. Agreed, answered Acelia, I consent to become security for my husband : but only upon condition that he never knows it.

Melidor had given Acelia a faithful account of all his debts excepting one, and this he had not as yet dared to discover to her. At night, hearing him sigh more than usual, she endeavoured by every gentle art to console him.——Alas! madam, you are still in ignorance of some part of my situation.——He could go no further; these words were succeeded by profound silence. In vain did Acelia press him to be more explicit ; shame put a stop to his voice.——What ! my dear Melidor, what sorrows can you have, which you should be unwilling to declare to me ? Can you find a friend any where more affectionate, faithful, or indulgent than myself?——The greater claim, madam, that you have to my esteem, the more I ought to blush at the confession which it remains to make. You have perhaps heard of the courtesan Eleanora : ah! how can I reveal the rest ? She has notes of hand from me to the value of fifty thousand crowns. Acelia saw with transport, that now the happy moment was arrived to regain the whole of Melidor's affection. It would now, said she, be out of season to reproach you for a folly at which you blush yourself, and to which perhaps my own too great dissipation amidst the amusements

ments of fashionable life may have contributed not a little. Let us both forget, and both amend our faults; I have already endeavoured to retrieve my own misconduct, and perhaps this instance of your's may not be without remedy either. Melidor could scarcely conceive it possible, that a woman so gay and thoughtless should on a sudden have acquired so much sedateness. Acelia, on her side, was nothing less surprized, that a man so vain and ostentatious, should become in a moment so mild and tractable. They said mutually to each other, can it possibly turn out beneficial to us, to have thus fallen into misfortune.

The next day, after due consultation with herself, Acelia determined to pay a visit to Eleanora. Little do you think, said she to Eleanora, whom you have got for a visitor : it is a rival ; and then she immediately mentioned her name. Madam, answered Eleanora, I am under some confusion at this honour done me. I am but too sensible of my faults towards you : but my station of life must form my apology. It is Melidor whom you have to blame ; and now that I have the opportunity to have a personal view of you, indeed I cannot refrain from greatly blaming him myself. He has been more culpable, than I could have conceived.——As to these things, Eleanora, I have no complaints to make either against him or you. It is but a just punishment to a woman, immersed in all the dissipations of fashionable life, to have her husband sink into the vices of a libertine one ; but it gives me however some satisfaction, to find that Melidor has retained so much delicacy in his taste. You possess accomplishments both of mind and person, together with an air of decency and gracefulness, capable to embellish virtue.——Alas! madam, you are pleased to view me with too much indulgence : indeed this confirms to me, what I have often heard, that

that ladies possessed of the most real sentiments of virtue are not those, who are apt to be the most severe upon our conduct: as we possess nothing, which can be an object of envy to them; they have therefore the goodness to lament our situation. But those of our sex, whose conduct approaches nearest to ourselves, act in a very different manner; they declaim against us with severity and rancor, even while they imitate our manners.—This is not the article, that we blame most in those of your station, replied Acelia, who was desirous to lead the conversation to the object of her visit. It is not that weakness at which so many of our sex have too much reason to blush, but it is another passion of a more odious stamp. As to the former, the ardour of youth, a relish for pleasures, the seductions of an uncontrouled and voluptuous life, sometimes even an affectionate sensibility of heart, and I esteem you to be susceptible of every tender impression, any of these may form at least some excuse for misconduct: but in thus forfeiting all claim to the virtue of a woman, it becomes so much the more incumbent on you to retain at least those virtues, which ought to be inseparable from man. Do there not still remain some species of honour, which you ought never to renounce?—Yes, without doubt.—Tell me then sincerely, Eleanora, do you conceive it consistent with any degree of honour, for a woman to abuse the folly and infatuation of a lover; and this to such excess, as to exact and actually obtain from him such exorbitant stipulations, as must become the total ruin of his family. Melidor has given you promissory notes of hand for fifty thousand crowns. Do you rightly consider the importance of these things? And what good reason there is to be severe upon those who practice such impositions?—Madam, they were gifts perfectly voluntary in Melidor, and M. Duran-
son

son can testify, that I refused much more.—What! do you know Duranson?—Yes, it was he, who brought me first acquainted with Melidor; and on that account I agreed to release him from some obligations he was under to me.—Oh! very well! I suppose then, he has turned over to Melidor the debt due to you, and made him answerable for it.—He assured me, and I supposed that this was done with Melidor's consent. As to the rest, Melidor was at his own liberty; whatever I received from him were mere presents, and I apprehend that I have a just title to them.—You think so? But would you think the same, if you were one of the children, who are thus despoiled of their birth right. Only substitute yourself in the place of the mother of a family, whose husband thus becomes the ruin of himself and her; while she expects every day to see him dishonoured in the public esteem, prosecuted by creditors, deprived of his effects, degraded from his posts, compelled to hide himself from the eyes of the world, and leave his wife and children a prey to shame and sorrow. Suppose yourself for one moment to be this very woman thus afflicted, thus overwhelmed; and then judge of her situation. To what remedies in such a case would you omit to fly for refuge? You would doubtless seek redress from the laws, which watch over such unjustifiable practices: there your just complaints and tears would certainly find a way to justice, and enable you to punish these odious impositions; there the voice of equity and of nature would unite themselves in behalf of the unhappy sufferer. Yes, Eleanora, the laws are severe against those, who practice poisonous arts: the gift of pleasing is a poison, when abused by the possessor: it is true, it does not attempt the life, but it aims at reason and honour; and if any one exacts and obtains exorbitant sacrifices from a person under the influence

influence of such infatuation; then what you are pleased to call voluntary gifts, do in reality amount to barefaced robberies. This is what others would say to you: this too is what you would doubtless say to yourself, if like me you were the mother of a family. But you shall find, that I am more moderate. Melidor you say is in your debt; I am come to discharge it; you will be paid with generosity, but not extravagance. It is now six months since he has been a captive to your charms; a thousand louis'dors then you must acknowledge to be very munificent. Eleonora was so affected and confused at Acelia's discourse and noble manner, that she had not courage to refuse the offer; but immediately producing the notes of Melidor, at Acelia's desire she accompanied her to the lawyer's.

Would not you rather chuse, said Acelia on their arrival, to have an annuity of a hundred louis'dors, than the principal, the thousand louis'dores themselves; for these will soon be dissipated in your hands! Consider, child, the difficulty to detach one's self from the habits of a vicious life: by securing to yourself an annuity, you will place yourself above the reach of want; and I have a kind of foreboding within me, that some time or other you will esteem yourself happy, to have it thus in your power to lead a life of virtue. Eleonora accepted the proposal, and kissing Acelia's hands with eyes moistened with tears. Ah! madam, said she at parting, how amiable and interesting is virtue in that unaffected garb with which you adorn it; if ever I should have the happiness to return to its paths, my grateful heart shall never cease to acknowledge, that to you I was indebted for such a blessing.

The lawyer, charmed with Acelia's conduct, informed her, that he had procured the loan of the two hundred thousand crowns, and they were already in
his

his hands. She returned home elated with joy, carrying the notes of hand with her, and hastening to Melidor : There, Sir, said she, there are your billet-doux ; pray write such tender ones no more. The friend Duranson happened to be present ; by her husband's countenance she perceived plainly, that Duranson had been working upon him, and had wrought him up to a blush at being governed by his wife. You seem to receive your billet-doux but coolly, said Acelia, nevertheless they come from a very dear hand. What, madam ! do you think I can be pleased at being made the jest of all the town : my misfortunes are in the mouths of all ; you render them so notorious, that even my friends can no longer deny them.—Your friends, Sir ! have they then any method to remove them without noise ? I suppose they are come to offer you their purse and good offices : Mr. Duranson for example.—Me, Madam ! I am sorry that I have nothing in my power : but I apprehend it would have been possible to have found resources, without making his situation notorious.—Aye, such resources, Duranson, as would leave no possible resource behind : my husband has already dealt too long in such resources ; and no one knows it better than yourself. As to the dishonour which you annex to the notoriety of our misfortunes, I am perfectly well acquainted with your delicacy on that head ; and believe me, Sir, I have the esteem for it that a woman ought.—Madam, I have every where the character of a man of honour ; the whole world knows it.—The world cannot but know it, because you tell it to all the world : but as Melidor will have no occasion for you to conduct any more amorous intrigues for him, your honour will become useless. At these words Melidor himself took fire, and told his wife, that she was deficient in respect to him by thus insulting his friend.

friend. Acelia was about to proceed in her charge; but without staying to hear any more, Melidor retired in great warmth, and Duranson attended him.

Acelia was in no less emotion herself; however, leaving them to conspire together, she applied herself to the care of her family: her son's tutor, since their misfortunes became public, pretended that his function was beneath him, and openly testified his dissatisfaction. Acelia discharged him that very evening, and supplied his place with an Abbé, a plain and modest man of sufficient abilities; whom she requested to live with them as a friend, and to cultivate in his pupil his own simplicity of manners. Melidor, whom Duranson had now gained upon to consider the command, which his wife had assumed, to be the lowest state of humiliation to himself, was still more disgusted at the tutor's discharge.—Yes, Sir, said Acelia, it is true; I am guilty of procuring for my son a man of sense instead of a coxcomb; I have some pretensions to attempt still further innovations, namely to separate from you an insolent flatterer, who has made you the paymaster of his own pleasures. These are the wrongs I do you: I confess them, and if you please you may make them public.—It is intolerable, Madam, it is intolerable thus to abuse my situation, and dictate laws to me in my own house: no, my misfortunes are not yet arrived at such a pass, that I should submit to be a slave at home. Your duty was to engage as my security; you have not performed it; your pretended services are of no use without that; I shall henceforth consider you as nothing to me; if I have brought myself to distress, it was on your account; the only remaining remedy for my misfortunes is to remove the cause of it; to-morrow we will separate.—No, Sir, the moment of separation is not yet arrived. In a short time you'll enjoy again, without
out

out reproach, a competent fortune, again will be at liberty, be at peace, and happy: as soon as I have re-established your credit and repose, then we shall see, whether your wife is to give place to the contriver of your ruin; or whether I ought not rather of my own accord, as a just punishment for your proposal, abandon you to your fate upon the brink of that abyss from whence I had so lately preserved you. Until then, Melidor, we are inseparable; both my own duty and your misfortunes are sacred ties to me: to-morrow you yourself shall be judge whether you have a friend worthy to be preferred to me: before that very friend will I produce undoubted proofs of his perfidy; and I shall be content to forfeit your esteem for ever, if he himself will dare to deny them.

Melidor, confounded at the resolution and generosity which Acelia manifested, was agitated all night between pique and gratitude. But at waking he received a letter, which plunged him again into despair: the letter informed him, that the whole talk at court was concerning his luxury and extravagance, and the consequent ruinous situation of his affairs; that all the world joined in blaming him highly, that nothing less was proposed than to deprive him of his place. There Acelia! said he, read madam, read there, and tremble at the situation to which your services have reduced me. Oh my friend! said he to Duranson, who arrived that moment, I am undone; 'tis just as you foretold; the noise she has made in pretending to mend my affairs has brought irrecoverable disgrace upon me. Duranson appeared to be overwhelmed with this sorrowful account. Never fear, said Acelia, your loan of money is very secure; you shall lose nothing except the exorbitant interest, which you would exact from your friend. Yes, Melidor, this friend of yours is our usurer, and pawn-broker,

broker.—What I, Madam!—Yes, you Sir, and the proofs of it are now in my hands, there they are Melidor: nor is this all; your worthy friend has made you the paymaster for his own amours with Eleanora; nay, he even dared to attempt the seduction of your wife, and to inform her of your intrigues: it is he who has ruined you under fictitious names.—Ah! this is too much to bear, said Duranson, and instantly arose from his seat. Stay, said Acelia, one word more before you depart. This moment will I unmask you to the world, your true character shall be made known both at court and city, and in all places shall be marked in all its infamy; unless immediately you accompany me to my lawyer's, and produce there all our pledges and notes of hand in your possession. Duranson turned pale, made no reply, but sneaked away, and left Melidor almost immoveable between indignation and astonishment. Resume your spirits, said Acelia, I'll repair instantly to court, and try to appease the storm: before night I hope it will be dispersed. Immediately she departed, calls at her lawyer's, engages as security for her husband, receives the loan of two hundred thousand crowns, acquits all his debts, beginning with those of Duranson, who had been prudent enough to send the pledges and notes in question, and to consent to receive the principal without usury. From thence Acelia repaired to court.

The minister of state did not dissemble his dissatisfaction, nor the resolution which had been taken to deprive Melidor of his post. I cannot pretend, said she, to excuse him: luxury is without doubt a folly, but the folly has been mine rather than his: his complaisance to me has been his only fault; and from what can a husband abstain for the sake of a wife he loves? I was young, and in his eyes agreeable; he
knew

knew no unhappiness like that of displeasing me. This, Sir, has been the source of his misfortunes; but our affairs are now re-established again; I have sacrificed to his service, what the law had secured to myself; all his other debts are discharged.—What, Madam! have you become security for him?—I have; and who so proper to recover him from ruin, as she who was the cause of it? Yet in being his security I have acquired a right to manage all his own revenues hereafter; and I have already reduced things to the most severe oeconomy. But, sir, I shall lose both the confidence and esteem of my husband if you thus punish him for my faults, with which he will still be intitled to reproach me, so long as I am unable to remove the effects of them. You have too much sensibility and humanity for this. And for what would you punish him! For having loved his wife better than himself; for having sacrificed prudence to affection. The consequence will be, that I shall be rendered odious; and he will have too just an occasion to remind his children of the disgrace and ruin into which their mother had plunged them. And to whom would you make satisfaction by this punishment? To the public? Ah! Sir, it is an envious and malicious public, which in no respect deserves such complaisance. As for that part of the public inclined to be equitable in its judgment; give us an opportunity of setting an example before it much more useful and instructive than our ruin. The world will see, that a wife of prudence is able to reclaim a husband of good principles, and that hearts born with generous qualities can find inexhaustible resources in their own resolution and virtue. The minister hearkened to Acelia with surprize. So far, said he, from throwing obstacles in the way to obstruct your views, I shall rather second your endeavours, even at the
same

same time that I punish your husband; his post he must resign.—Ah! Sir, resign!—I have disposed of it in favour of your son, and out of regard to you the father shall have the survivorship. The surprize of Acelia to obtain such a favour instead of a chastisement made her fall almost prostrate at his knees; Sir, said she, this is worthy of your station, thus to correct the parent of a family! But my tears, which I am no longer able to restrain, are the best tokens of my gratitude: my children, my husband, myself shall never cease to bless your generosity. Melidor waited for Acelia's return with impatience; but solicitude gave place to joy, as soon as she had related the conversation: Is it now? said she, embracing him; is it to-day, that we are to separate? Do you still think that you have a friend who is preferable to your wife?

No one is ignorant how soon reports are spread at Paris; and how soon they give place to others, which are likewise in their turn no sooner raised, than they subside again. The misfortunes of Melidor had been the principal conversation for some days; but now the re-establishment of his affairs, and the resolute part which Acelia had acted, produced a revolution both in the judgment of the public, and the topics of discourse. The prudence and spirit of Acelia became now as much the subject of conversation, as lately the folly of her husband. When she now appeared again in public with that modest and easy air, which ever accompanies those who neither court nor fear the attention of others, she was received in all places with a degree of respect beyond what she had ever experienced: then it was that she felt the value of that eminence, which arises from the solid endowments of virtue; and never had her heart been so much flattered even by the homage paid to her youth and beauty.

Melidor,

Melidor, either more timid or more vain, seemed at a loss as to what air he should assume, and with what countenance he should appear in public. Let us, said Acelia, to him, let us ingenuously confess, that we have been imprudent, but that now we are become more wise. No man has any thing to reproach us; we have paid all our debts; let us then not be the first to humble ourselves. When the world observes, that we ourselves are not ashamed to have met with correction, they will esteem us the more. But with what face, answered Melidor, shall we view that multitude of false friends, who abandoned us on the first rumour of our disgrace?—With the same face, with which, for my own part, I have ever viewed them, namely, as beings, whom the mere search of pleasure attracted to our house, and who as readily flew away along with it. What right had you to place any dependence upon them? Was it out of any particular friendship to them, that your table smothered with costly feasts, and your saloon re-echoed with festivity? No, the houses of the opulent and prodigal are but places of public diversion, where each man thinks that he has paid his share of the price, when he has contributed his share to the common entertainment: as soon as the scene is finished, each retires to his own home, and none of them esteem, that they remain under obligation to one another. The observation of this may indeed be unwelcome in reflection; but it being thus awakened from the illusion, that personal attachment drew to us this croud of visitors, we exchange an agreeable error for an useful truth. It is in this, as in the case of many remedies; in the bitterness of them consists the benefit. View the world then as it is; without being either humbled at the thought of having been ignorant of it before, or without boasting either of being acquainted with it

now.

now. But above all, let us be careful that we conceal from the world our own petty altercations; and that neither of us appear to have given way to the other: but, on the contrary, that one and the same spirit may seem to have actuated and animated both. For although it is by no means so ridiculous, as the world pretends, for a man to suffer himself to be guided by a woman; yet I should be sorry that the publick should be acquainted, how much in the present affair you have been influenced by my advice. Melidor was satisfied, that he owed the re-establishment of his affairs intirely to his wife, but none of those obligations touched him so sensibly, as this piece of delicacy concerning his credit in the eyes of the world; and he was ingenuous enough to confess it. Acelia had a further view than, merely to manage the vanity of her husband; she was desirous also to engage him by means of that very vanity, to pursue, of his own accord, the plan which she had traced out. If he perceives, said she to herself, all the world to be persuaded, that he has been directed throughout merely by his own will and inclinations, in a short time he will believe it himself; and then he will hold with the more constancy to our plan of reformation: for it is the nature of man to abide by his own determinations through the force of that same spirit of liberty, which dictates to him to resist the suggestions of others: the most essential point in the art of leading others, is to conceal from them that they are led at all.

Acelia therefore took care in public always to attribute to her husband, as his due, those commendations which the world bestowed upon herself: and Melidor on his side never mentioned Acelia's name but with the utmost respect. Nevertheless, she had some fears lest the silence and solitude of his house

should induce him to alter his present sentiments: it is with difficulty one can retain a man in constancy, when he grows tired of his way of life; and before it could be expected, that Melidor could sit down to serious occupation, it was necessary to engage him with amusements. Acelia therefore applied herself to form for him a small but choice society: I invite you not to festivals, said she to the ladies she engaged, but instead of pomp we'll have pleasure: I shall give you only a decent supper; we'll drink to our friends health at perfect liberty, and sometimes perhaps we may be merry; a circumstance not very common in the great world. She kept her word: and her husband was the only one of the company, who regretted the want of opulence. Not but he endeavoured to accustom himself to this life of simplicity, but one might almost say, that he found the same vacuity in his soul, as in his apartments: his eyes and ears, habituated to noise and tumult, became stupified with quiet and repose: he still beheld with envy those, who like himself were plunging into ruin; and Paris, where he found himself restrained to privacy in the midst of diversions, began to appear in an odious light. Acelia, who perceived it, and who pursued her plan with a degree of constancy seldom found, except in women, proposed to him a visit to his country estates: but before their departure she left a commission with her lawyer, that instead of their present magnificent hotel, he should hire a smaller house against their return, which, although more simple, should not be destitute of elegance.

Of the three estates, that Melidor had purchased, those two which had the most honourable rights annexed to them, scarcely produced one third of the interest of his money. It was decided, that they should be sold directly; the other hitherto neglected

was

was capable of great improvements. This, said Acelia, is the estate which we must reserve; let us employ every means to raise its value; the air is healthy; the situation pleasant; the soil fertile; here will we spend the best part of the summer; and here will we improve our mutual affections: your wife shall have none of the airs, the caprices, and the artifices of coquets; but a sincere and affectionate friendship; which, in case your heart can bear its share therein, will be productive of happiness to yourself, to me, to our children, and joy to all the family. I know not whence it is, but ever since I breathed the country air, my taste for pleasure is become more simple and natural; happiness seems to be more within my reach than before, and follows closer at the foot of desire. I see and daily feel it in all its purity slide in amidst the innocence of rural manners: now for the first time have I conceived a just idea of the serenity of a blameless life, which flows peaceably along to the last moment. Melidor hearkened to his wife with attention, and her discourse afforded a consolation, that diffused itself, like a soft and delicious balm, throughout all his soul. He consented, but not without difficulty, to the sale of those estates, the pompous titles of which had flattered his vanity: and there now remained nothing except to secure him against the force of his late habits; nor did Acelia, who knew his foibles, despair of being able to remove his relish for luxury, by inducing him to cultivate a taste for amusements less vain and more satisfactory. The estate, which they had reserved, offered a large field for useful employment; and in order to engage his attention to it, Acelia formed a little council of husband-men: this council consisted of seven of the most sensible of the neighbouring farmers, whom every Sunday she invited to dinner: she always called this assembly in

100 THE GOOD WIFE.

Melidor's presence, *the banquet of the seven sages*. The council was held at table; Melidor, Acelia, and the Abbé assisted at it. The quality of soils, the culture most suitable, pasturage, harvest, plantations, flocks; and the whole detail of rural œconomy, were the subjects of their conversations. With a glass in their hands, and warmth of discourse from their mouths, they so excited and animated each other, that in hearing them talk, one would imagine, they had found some hidden treasures in the earth, which only waited for the hands of those, who would come to receive and enjoy them.

Melidor, after having been thus accustomed to simplicity, was on his return to Paris far from being disgusted with his new house; it was small, but convenient and pleasant, furnished without pomp, but yet with taste. Yes, my dear friend, said Acelia, this house is quite suitable to us; it is large enough to be happy in, if we ourselves be but wise. She had very soon the satisfaction to find him as much tired of Paris, as before he was wont to be charmed with it: he now thought himself obscurely confounded with the inferior multitude; and therefore longed for the country again, where he still seemed to enjoy some remains of superiority.

The fortunate spot, to which this happy pair returned with the earliest return of spring, became at length, through the care of Melidor, a delightful scene of plenty and fertility; but a scene still more interesting was the education of their children. That native penetration and sense which Acelia possessed, and which remained unknown until occasion and necessity had called them forth, soon taught her to seize upon the right method of managing her young family; and operated as successfully upon them as upon her husband. Through her care they acquired neither

that unsociable timidity nor that pert familiarity so common to others of their age: throughout their carriage, their behaviour and conversation, there appeared nothing but what seemed the effect of a happy nature; so much ease had habit communicated to what their mother's art had dictated. Instead of confiding altogether in tutors, Acelia became their tutor herself. See, said she, see how the turtles provide not only nourishment, but give instruction to their young; let us imitate their example: besides instructing our offspring, another advantage will result from it, that of instructing ourselves. Let us live among our children; let us have them ever in our eyes; let them at all times have communication with ourselves; let us accustom them to examine and reflect in their own minds; let us with gentleness, and without impatience, aid them to unfold their opening ideas: let us not repress their curiosity by a repulse in a tone of harshness and contempt. Severity is only useful to remedy those evils, which our own negligence had created; there is no occasion for it therefore in a system of education, where we shall so continually watch over the first rise of evil habits, as by leaving no room for nature to take a wrong bias, we shall be obliged to employ no harshness to correct it. Oh! how happy must parents be in the possession of such children! It is the most affecting scene of all human enjoyments!

Nor in these her maternal cares did Acelia lose sight of her former plan of fixing her husband's relish to his new station; she hoped to interest him in the same concerns, and thereby assist in filling up the vacuities of life. Is it possible? would she often say to Melidor, is it possible, that so pure a pleasure should be so little known, and less valued. That the very satisfaction which is the most natural of all, should be the least frequently enjoyed among mankind? We have

children, and we grow tired of them! We search after pleasures abroad, while we may enjoy at home the most affecting of all sensations, at the same time that we practise duties of the last importance!—True, answered Melidor, when children have good dispositions, they are doubtless blessings; but they are not always born with such happy qualities. Who can tell that? replied Acelia. How do we know with what endowments heaven may have blessed them, until we have exerted ourselves in their education? Ah! my dear sir, I am afraid that we often blame nature in order to excuse ourselves: 'tis common to begin with calumniating another in order to justify ones self: before we can have any right to believe nature incorrigible, we should first use our utmost endeavours to correct it. We ourselves are not malicious, or by nature inclined to ill: why then should we think our children so? Let us live along with them; let us live for them; and then I will venture to promise, that they will resemble you and me. Melidor, by degrees, entered heartily into these sentiments; the more he conversed with his children, the more he interested himself in their instruction; and while his hours were thus divided between the education of them, and the amusements of the country, he no longer found any vacuities in life; time, which used to hang heavily on his hands, seemed now to hasten along with precipitation: he complained that the day was too short for all his occupations, that he was often compelled to steal some portion of it from one amusement in order to enjoy some other. By often instructing his young family he perceived at length, that he wanted instruction himself; and the discovery of this produced in him a studious application to knowledge. As soon as Acelia saw him take this turn, now, said she, my success is compleat indeed; my husband, myself, my family

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mily will now be happy for ever: he has now gained a relish for such pleasures, as cost but little, and may be enjoyed at large: pleasures which never cloy in the possession, nor drive one to that most extreme folly in a rational creature, to be forced to fly from one's self.

Melidor, thus returned to himself, so far from blushing, as before, at being guided by a woman, ingenuously confessed in all companies, that he was solely indebted to his wife for his recovery; he gloried in relating by what means she by degrees disengaged him from his past course of irregularity; and while he expatiated on her sense, resolution, gentleness, and perseverance, all the world readily joined in his commendations, and said; aye! this is indeed a Good WIFE.



ASCANIO AND SOPHRONIA.

AMONGST the few countries which the Venetians still preserve in the Archipelago, that of Tine or Tenos is the most considerable, and the Governor or Proveditore lives there in the greatest splendor, though he is in some measure subject to the general of the islands, who resides at Suda. Signior Pietro Foscarini, the younger brother of an illustrious family, once held that post, and discharged it with honour. He carried thither his lady, his two sons Francisco and Julio, young men of great hopes, and his little daughter Sophronia, who was about nine

years old. In a short time after his arrival, the lieutenant of the fortress, and the next in command to himself, died, upon which he endeavoured to procure that post for a friend of his; but the Venetian general at Suda was no sooner informed that it was vacant, than he sent thither, in that quality, Signior Scipio Montalto, an Albanese, one who had served the state of Venice for many years with great fidelity and reputation, and whose merit, as he informed the governor by letter, might justly have intitled him to much higher preferment. This Signior Foscarini did not deny, but wished that either justice or favour had found him an employment suitable to his deserts in some other place, and had thereby left him the choice of his own officers.

It was for this reason, and this only, that he received Montalto but coldly, when he presented the general's letter. Yet, as he was conscious to himself that this prejudice was beneath him, he endeavoured to conceal it. Montalto was a brave rough soldier, one who despised intrigues, and had so little notion of envy or malicious piques, that he took it for granted that the Proveditore was the best friend he had in the world. He brought with him likewise his wife, who had in her youth been bred up in the same convent with the lady Foscarini, who not entering at all into her husband's sentiments, looked upon this as a very fortunate event, and provided for Signior Montalto a fine house in the town of Nicolo, the garden of which joined to their own.

It is requisite to observe, that the fortress, on which is the governor's palace, stands upon a very high rock, at a considerable distance from the town. The Proveditore, or his lieutenant, resided alternately in the fortress, and, when one was there, the other lived with his family in the town. This had a good effect,

ect, in preventing the governor's secret dislike from appearing, because they were seldom there together; sometimes, however, they were, more especially when the Turkish fleets were in the Archipelago, and the island consequently in a degree of danger, when the governor, in right of his post, would frequently, under different pretences, put his lieutenant upon hard and disagreeable services, which, however, he performed with such punctuality, that, though Signior Foscarini would not have been displeased with, but rather sought an opportunity to chide him, it was never in his power; yet this circumstance did not remove his distaste, and there were others, which without cause served to increase it.

Whenever his sons were with the Proveditore at the castle, they continually affected the company of Montalto, who not only shewed them all the respect due to their birth, but as much affection as if they had been his own, improved them in their exercises, taught them the use of arms, and when, upon any suspicion of the Infidels landing, the inhabitants of the island were alarmed, carried them with him in his expeditions, to scour the country. These young men therefore were frequently commending him to their father, who heard them with a silent discontent; for he was ashamed to betray his weakness to his children, and could not find in his heart to forbid them the company of a man from whose conversation and example they gathered daily advantages. On the other hand, when he was with his family in town, he saw the two ladies live like sisters, and his little daughter, born on the same day with Montalto's only son Ascanio, playing with him in the garden with that innocent delight which was natural to their tender years.

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In this situation things continued for a long time, till one day, when the Proveditore was alone with his son Francisco, and observing a fine scymiter by his side, he asked him how he came by it? To which he answered, it was a present from Montalto. The reply his father made was so harsh, that the young man begged leave to return it, which the Proveditore would not permit; adding, however, that it was not agreeable to him he should receive presents of such value from his inferior officer. Francisco penetrated his father's disposition from that moment, and avoided giving him the least offence. It was with some difficulty that he insinuated it to his brother Julio, who was of a frank and open temper, and frequently at a loss to excuse himself from accepting those favours which Montalto, who was both generous and rich, endeavoured to force upon him. Observing at length that he took it ill, the ingenious young man, unable to bear the imputation of ingratitude, plainly told him the reason. Montalto, after musing some time, embraced him tenderly, and then said, "If I had not been a blockhead, I might have discerned this long ago, and have spared you, my child, this uneasy discovery. But what signifies it? I love you and your brother so well, that I must love your father, and will henceforth pay him as much submission as if he was mine. Come, Julio, do not be melancholy, it is a misfortune to us, but it is much more so to him, and for all our sakes it must be our study to moderate it."

Signior Foscarini was, in some measure, but not wholly, the dupe of this contrivance; he saw the reserve of his sons to Montalto with a secret satisfaction, but he was far from being pleased with the extraordinary assiduity of the latter. However, eight years past without any extraordinary accident.

About

About this time an epidemic distemper broke out in the island, by which Montalto lost his wife, which though he bore with exterior firmness, yet it gave so deep a wound to his mind, that a few months after he was also taken ill. When he found his end draw nigh, he sent for Francisco and Julio, whom he took leave of in a short pathetic speech, in which he recommended to them, love to their country, duty to their father, and kindness to his son whom he left to their protection. When he was dying, he said to Ascanio, love the Proveditore's family, and love him too, and may heaven defend thee from inheriting thy father's misfortunes. He could say no more, and Ascanio could very imperfectly understand what he did say, as appeared upon his first seeing the governor, at whose feet he fell, and with a flood of tears said, 'I have lost Montalto, my lord, you must be my father;' to which he answered coldly, 'I have children of my own.' Francisco and Julio, who stood by, perceiving how great an impression this made on the young man's spirits, took and embraced him tenderly.

Within three months after the death of Montalto, a small galley arrived from Venice with the news that Signior Foscarini's elder brother was dead, by which he inherited a vast estate; he was farther informed, that Signior Paruta was appointed his successor, and would speedily arrive. This filled the governor and his family with joy, Sophronia only accepted, between whom and Ascanio the friendship of their childhood had subsisted till it had ripened into passion. She was the first to communicate this news to her lover, whom she met secretly in a grotto that he had wrought with his own hands, under a little pavilion that separated their gardens, and threw him into such a fit of despair, as had like to have cost him his life. He

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continued ill for several days, and the concern that this gave Sophronia, made Julio guess at their sentiments for each other. He took the first opportunity of speaking to Sophronia and without expecting a confession, told her that nobody could be more sensible than he of Ascanio's merit, yet he should be sorry if she had a tendernefs for him, since it was impossible to prevail upon their father to hear of such an alliance.

She answered only by her tears, and by a sigh which sufficiently expressed her meaning. Julio communicated what he had discovered to Francisco, who told him, that, in his judgment, the son of Montalto deserved any woman in Venice. He went to visit that unfortunate young man, and found him weak in his body, and disturbed in his mind; he laboured all he could to comfort him, and bid him rely on his friendship in every circumstance. Ascanio thanked him with tears in his eyes, and this assurance contributed not a little to his recovery. Julio also made him a visit, in which he insinuated to him, that he was not ignorant of his affection for his sister: but gave him to understand, that this was a secret that must not reach Foscarini's ears; for, said he, since the death of your father, you are no longer a favourite; and therefore beware how you expose yourself or Sophronia to his resentment.

At this juncture, Signior Paruta arrived, and took possession of the fortress; but, when Foscarini came to embark, Sophronia was missing, and, upon enquiry, he was informed, that Ascanio had carried her away. In the heat of his resentment he wrote a very angry letter to Signior Paruta, demanding that his daughter should be sent on board, and Ascanio punished as a ravisher.

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The new governor sent him for answer, that he was sorry that he could not grant his request ; that the young lady was married ; that Ascanio had demanded his protection ; and that he could not proceed against either, without an order from the state of Venice. Signior Foscarini, as soon as he had received this letter, weighed anchor, and proceeded on his voyage for Venice, where he safely arrived. He would have prosecuted Ascanio on his first coming, if his sons had not represented to him, that it would be more for the honour of the family to conceal this misfortune ; and his wife suggested that, as the new governor of Tine was not his friend, they would have notice of any order he should procure, and might shelter themselves in any of the adjacent islands. He gave no answer to these insinuations, but he commenced no prosecution, and for the space of six years never mentioned his daughter's name ; so that his family thought that he had first stifled his resentment through pride, and that time had, in some measure, wore it out.

There was some degree of artifice in the manner in which Ascanio had prevailed on Sophronia to leave her father's house. Her mother was at the fortress directing the removal of their effects, her brothers were attending their father who had a contest with the new governor on his first arrival, when Ascanio alarmed her with the apprehension of the Turks being in sight of the place, and engaged her to fly with him and his servants to the Greek villages on the other side of the island. The next day, when she knew the truth, she was equally loath to leave Ascanio for ever, and afraid to return to her offended father ; so that, without much difficulty, her lover prevailed upon her to become his wife. She was, however, far from forgiving herself for this breach of obedience ; and, though

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though Ascanio was one of the fondest and best of husbands, the thought of it hung always heavy on her mind. When they went to the new governor to desire his protection, he shewed them so much respect, that both Ascanio and Sophronia were not a little surprised, not being able to divine the motive.

After the Proveditore had changed the garrison, and sung Tedeum on taking possession of his government, he went to make Ascanio a visit. As soon as they were alone, Ascanio said to the Proveditore, I am a stranger to you, but I should not have been so to your father; I made my first campaign under him, and therefore you must consider me as an old friend, though I am but a new acquaintance. The general gave me leave to name my own lieutenant, and I am sure he will be satisfied, when he knows that I have appointed you to succeed your father; and I give you the late governor's house at St. Nicolo, at least so long as I hold this post; when I go to take the air, it shall be in the Greek villages, that I may the sooner become acquainted with the whole extent of the island.' Signior Montalto and his spouse were at a loss to express their gratitude, and in amaze to find themselves in a situation that exceeded their utmost wishes.

About the close of the first year after her marriage, Sophronia was brought to bed of a daughter, to whom Ascanio gave the name of Arpasia; and, as they had no other child in the space of five years, it is no wonder that they were extravagantly fond of her; her beauty and wit surpassed her age, and it was impossible for parents to be happier; but this felicity, as all sublunary happiness is uncertain, was fatally disturbed, and, that too, by a stroke which was equally impossible for him to foresee or prevent.

About four years after his return to Venice, Signior Foscarini lost his eldest son, and, three years after the
other.

other. He was extremely sensible of these misfortunes, and his wife was inconsolable. In the depth of her affliction she passionately bewailed the absence of her daughter: 'My sons, said she, have been taken from me by death, who is inexorable; but the loss of my daughter is entirely owing to the severity of your temper.' Signior Foscarini seemed to be deeply affected with what she said, but made her no answer. Some days after he went over to the Terra Firma under pretence of diverting himself at an estate he had there; but, instead of going thither, he went to Leghorn, where, for a thousand sequins, he prevailed upon the captain of a Corsair vessel to proceed with him on a secret expedition into the Arches.

Arriving at the coast of Tine in the night, he surprized a poor peasant, who informed him that Montalto was in the fortress, and the governor at his house, in one of the Greek villages. This pleased him exceedingly. He landed near the wall of that which had been his own garden, and, being well acquainted with all the avenues, easily surprized Sophronia, who had scarce time to put on her cloaths. As he was disguised in a Slavonian habit, she had not the least knowledge of him, but imagined that herself and her daughter were to be carried into slavery. The servants of the house made some resistance, and two of the Corsairs were wounded. Signior Foscarini dipped some of his daughter's cloaths in the blood of the wounded, and left them on the strand. He had scarce reached his boat before the whole town was alarmed and in motion, and Montalto, at the head of an hundred men, sallied from the fortress; but the Corsair was soon under sail, and out of their reach. The next day vessels were dispatched on every side of the island, but brought no satisfactory intelligence.

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It is impossible to express the sorrow of Montalto, who had not the least suspicion, that this blow was given by any other hand than that of the Infidels; against whom his resentment was so strong, that he resigned his employments, and built three small privateers, in which he cruised upon the Turkish shore, in hopes of gaining some intelligence of his daughter; for, with regard to his wife, he never entertained the least thought of her being alive.

Foscarini, at his arrival, presented Sophronia to her mother; but though it was some consolation to her to see her daughter after so long an absence, yet the circumstances that attend her being restored, very sensibly diminished her pleasure. Sophronia bore this cruel reverse of fortune with surprising constancy, avoiding every thing that might give her parents pain, and constantly employed her time in the education of her daughter.

A new war breaking out with the Turks, a Piedmontese nobleman, who had the command of the Venetian troops, proposed a descent upon the city of Canae, an island of Candy; which was so well concerted, that it was thought almost impossible to fail of success. Signior Foscarini had the command of a squadron of gallies, which were employed in this expedition. Before the fleet reached Suda, it was joined by all the privateers, and among the rest by Signior Montalto, with nine vessels, five of which were his own, and the others, on this occasion, voluntarily obeyed his orders. The Marquis Vila, who was the general, landed with five thousand men, and encamped before the city; but finding himself too weak, he demanded a reinforcement from the fleet, upon which Foscarini landed with seven hundred seamen: the privateers, to distress the enemy as much as possible, were ordered to alarm the coast.

The

The evening of the same day, the Turks attacked the marquis in his intrenchments with a superior force, and after an obstinate resistance gained a complete victory. Signior Foscarini, endeavouring, with his seamen, to cover the retreat, was, after a gallant resistance, taken prisoner, and carried to a village upon the coast. In the night Montalto landed, without knowing what had happened, attacked the village, drove out the Turks, and with an immense booty, part of which had been before taken from the Christians, brought thirteen Venetians on board his vessel. As those about the person of Foscarini treated him with the title of excellency, Montalto, without seeing him, ordered that he should be accommodated in his own cabin. A few hours after they heard of the defeat, upon which they weighed their anchors, and sailed for Suda. The next morning, when he went to pay his respects to the admiral of the gallies, he was astonished to see Signior Foscarini, who did not recollect him, till he heard that his name was Montalto; so greatly was he altered by his cares and fatigues. He immediately approached him, and after a ceremonious compliment, whispered softly in his ear, 'There is no necessity that these people should be acquainted with our surprize.' Montalto made a low obedience, and took his leave. When the squadron had joined the fleet, Foscarini went on board his own vessel, without so much as speaking to his son-in-law, who, on his part, was not very desirous of a second interview. The first news Foscarini heard was that his captain was killed in the engagement, on which he immediately sent for Montalto, and bestowed on him the command. During their return to Venice, he gave him the history of his expedition to Tine; adding at the close of it, 'You robbed me of my daughter, and I have robbed you of yours; heaven, it seems, will



will not suffer us to be any longer enemies ; for the short remainder of my life, Montalto, you shall be my friend and my son.'

As soon as the fleet arrived, he returned to his own palace, but remembering the surprize of her mother when he brought Sophronia thither, he would not introduce Montalto, till after both his mother-in-law and his wife had been informed of his arrival, and the adventure which produced the happy effect. After which he introduced Montalto, and perhaps this meeting was hardly ever excelled in tenderness ; but the reader must paint it in his own imagination, it being far beyond the power of words to describe. Thus providence, after innumerable troubles and difficulties, rendered them entirely happy ; and the evening of life became as calm and serene, as the middle of it had been cloudy and tempestuous.



The CHARACTER of the MAN of FALSE and of TRUE PLEASURE.

THE man of false pleasure is one who, desirous of being more happy than any man can be, is less happy than most men are ;—one who seeks happiness every-where, but where it is to be found ;—one who out-toils the labourer, not only without his wages, but paying dearly for it.—He is an immortal being, that has but two marks of a man about him, upright stature, and the power of playing the fool ; which a monkey has not.

He

He is an immortal being, that triumphs in this single, deplorable, and yet false hope, that he shall be as happy as a monkey, when they are both dead ; though he despairs of being so, while yet alive.

He is an immortal being, that would lose none of his most darling delights, if he were a brute in the mire ; but would lose them all entirely, if he were an angel in heaven.—It is certain, therefore, he desires not to be there : and, if he not so much as desires it now, how can he ever hope it, when his day of dissipation is over ? And, if no hope,—what is our man of pleasure ? A man of distraction, and despair, to-morrow. And who would buy to-day so dear, if it were so to be bought ? as certainly it is not.—Doubtless, the true man of pleasure, which is the latter character, is he who preserves order in his compounded nature, and gives the animal, rational, and immortal, their respective dues :—who, as immortal, places in the supreme being his supreme delight ; and, as rational, shunning superstitious austerities ; and, as animal, too great indulgencies ; admits of all secular enjoyments that are strictly consistent with his supreme. The true and false man of pleasure are brothers ; born of the same parent, viz. an inextinguishable love of delight : but so superior is the one to the other, that, like the fabled brothers, Castor and Pollux, one may be said to be in heaven, the other on earth.

To be more explicit, I would gather three particular branches from this general root of happiness, and present them to your sister, as a specimen of the rest.

There is no man of pleasure without his Evé ; no Eve without his serpent ; no serpent without its sting. He, that knows not the pure delight and ever-growing tenderness of a chaste love, knows not the most that the fairest can bestow.

He

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He, that knows not the sound cordiality, and constant warmth of a disinterested friendship, knows not the most that man can enjoy from man.

He, that keeps not open a constant intercourse with heaven, by frequent fervors of rational devotion, knows not a joy still sublimer than both.

To these characters we shall add the following affecting account of the last moments of a profligate.

A wretch, almost smothered with all the reputed means of happiness, would of all objects be the most ridiculous, were it not the most melancholy too. Diogenes went about the city of Athens, begging to the statues; being asked the reason, he said, he was learning to bear a repulse. These gentlemen should learn the same lesson; no statue can be deaser than most of their pursuits, when they ask real pleasure of them.

These are the men who, while providence lays the reins of free-will on their wanton necks, rush headlong into even unimportant temptations. But, when it shall put its hook in their nose, and its bridle in their jaws; when it shall drag them into the condition of your unhappy friend; or worse, when the tattered, convulsed body shall be shaking out an unwilling soul, loath to leave it for a still worse habitation; then, Oh! what a change!——It places full before me the last hours of that noble youth hinted at above. Last hours full of anguish! how fit to be remembered by those that wish peace to their own. This is the funeral, to which, in my first letter, I promised to invite your sister Sempronia, and her gay admirers; Sempronia, who delights psallere, & cantare, elegantius quam necesse est probæ. And what invitation more kind than that, for which she may thank me for ever, when other entertainments end? If they have their wine, this has its nectar.

Its

Its cup of salvation, pressed from that vine, whose leaves heal the nations, and whose swelling clusters teem with eternal bliss. Funeral solemnities are more for the sake of the living than the dead. What a trifle that honour, they receive from them, to the benefit we may reap from that affecting scene!

Oh! Sir, how affecting! It is still before my eyes. That wretched youth dies again! Again I am smitten with his death. It wounds me even in remembrance: what, then, the scene itself! No words can paint it, no time efface it; I meet it in my dreams, I shall bear it to my grave!

I am about to represent to you the last hours of a person of high birth and high spirit; of great parts and strong passions; every way accomplished, nor least in inequality. His unkind treatment was the death of a most amiable wife; and his great extravagance, in effect, disinherited his only child.

But to my point. The death-bed of a profligate is next in horror to that abyss, to which it leads. It has the most of hell, that is visible on earth; and he, that has seen it, has more than faith to confirm him in his creed. I see it now. For who can forget it? Are there in it no flames and furies?—You know not, then, what a scared imagination can figure, what a guilty heart can feel. How dismal is it! The two great enemies of soul and body, sickness and sin, sink and confound his friends; silence and darken the shocking scene. Sickness excludes the light of heaven, and sin its blessed hope. Oh! double darkness! more than Ægyptian! acutely to be felt!

How unlike those illuminated revels, of which he was the soul? Did this poor, pallid, scarce-animated mass dictate in the cabinet of pleasure, pronounce the fashion, and teach the gayest to be gay? Are these the trophies of his Paphian conquests? these the triumphs

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triumphs to be bought with heaven? Is this he who smote all their hearts with envy at his pre-eminence in guilt? See, how he lies a sad, deserted outcast, on a narrow isthmus between time and eternity? For he is scarce alive. Lashed and overwhelmed, on one side, by the sense of sin; on the other, by the dread of punishment! Beyond the reach of human help, and in despair of divine!

His dissipated fortune, impoverished babe, and murdered wife lie heavy on him; the ghost of his murdered time (for now no more is left) all stained with folly, and gashed with vice, haunts his distracted thought. Conscience, which long had slept, awakes like a giant refreshed with wine; lays waste all his former thoughts and desires; and, like a long-deposed, now victorious prince, on his bleeding heart imposes, inflicts its own. Its late soft whispers are thunder in his ears; and all means of grace rejected, exploded, ridiculed, are the bolt that strikes him dead: dead even to the thoughts of death. In deeper distress, despair of life is forgot. He lies a wretched wreck of man on the shore of eternity, and the next breath he draws blows him off into ruin.

The greatest profligate is, at least, a momentary saint, at such a sight; for this is a sight which plucks off the mask of folly, strips her of her gay disguise, which glittered in the false lights of this world's mummery, and makes her appear to be folly to the greatest fool.

How think we then? Is not the death-bed of a profligate the most natural and powerful antidote for the poison of his example? Heals not the bruised scorpion the wound it gave? Intends not heaven, that, struck with the terrors of such an exit, we should provide comfort for our own? Would not he, who departs obdurate from it, continue adamant, though one rose from the dead? For such a scene partly draws
aside

aside the curtain that divides time from futurity; and, in some measure, gives to sight that tremendous, of which we only had the feeble report before.

Is not this then a prime school of wisdom? Are not they obliged, that are invited to this? For what else should reclaim us? The pulpit? We are prejudiced against it. Besides, an agonising profligate, though silent, out-preaches the most celebrated the pulpit ever knew. But, if he speaks, his words might instruct the best instructors of mankind. Mixed in the warm converse of life, we think with men; on a death-bed, with God.

But there are two lessons of this school, written, as it were, in capitals, which they that run may read. First, He that, in this his minority, this school of discipline, this field of conflict, instead of grasping the weapons of his warfare, is for ever gathering flowers, and catching at butterflies, with his unarmed hand; ever making idle pleasures his pursuit; must pay for it his vast reversion; and, on opening his final account (of which a death-bed breaks the seal) shall find himself a beggar; a beggar past beggary; and shall passionately wish, that his very being were added to the rest of his loss.

Secondly, He shall find, that truth, divine truth, however, through life, injured, wounded, suppressed, is insuppressible, victorious, immortal. That, though with mountains overwhelmed, it will, one day, burst out like the fires of *Ætna*; visible, bright, and tormenting, as the most raging flame; as now (Oh! my friend!) I shall too plainly prove.

The sad evening before the day of that noble youth, whose last hours suggested these thoughts, I was with him. No one was there, but his physician, and an intimate whom he loved, and whom he had ruined. At my coming in, he said;

‘ You

‘ You and the physician are come too late.—I have neither life nor hope. You both aim at miracles. You would raise the dead.’

Heaven, I said, was merciful.

‘ Or I could not have been thus guilty. What has it not done to bless and to save me?—I have been too strong for omnipotence! I plucked down ruin.’

I said, the blessed Redeemer—

‘ Hold! hold! you wound me!—that is the rock on which I split—I denied his name.’

Refusing to hear any thing from me, or take any thing from the physician, he lay silent, as far as sudden darts of pain would permit, till the clock struck. Then with vehemence:

‘ Oh, time! time! It is fit thou shouldst thus strike thy murderer to the heart.—How art thou fled for ever?—A month—Oh! for a single week! I ask not for years; though an age were too little for the much I have to do.’

On my saying we could not do too much; that heaven was a blessed place—

‘ So much the worse. It is lost! it is lost!—Heaven is to me the severest part of hell.’

Soon after I proposed prayer.

‘ Pray you that can. I never prayed. I cannot pray.—Nor need I. Heaven is on my side already. It closes with my conscience. Its severest strokes but second my own.’

His friend being much touched, even to tears, at this (who could forbear? I could not) with a most affectionate look, he said:

‘ Keep those tears for thyself. I have undone thee.—Dost weep for me? That is cruel. What can pain me more?’

Here his friend, too much affected, would have left him.

‘ No,

‘No, stay. Thou still mayest hope;—therefore hear me. How madly have I talked? How madly hast thou listened, and believed? But look on my present state, as a full answer to thee and to myself. This body is all weakness and pain; but my soul, as if stung up by torment to greater strength and spirit, is full powerful to reason, full mighty to suffer. And that, which thus triumphs within the jaws of mortality, is, doubtless, immortal.—And, as for a Deity, nothing less than an Almighty could inflict what I feel.’

I was about to congratulate this passive, involuntary confessor, on his asserting the two prime articles of his creed, extorted by the rack of nature; when he thus, very passionately:

‘No, no! let me speak on; I have not long to speak.—My much-injured friend! my soul, as my body, lies in ruins; in scattered fragments of broken thought: remorse for the past throws my thought on the future. Worse dread of the future strikes it back on the past. I turn, and turn, and find no ray.—Didst thou feel half the mountain that is on me, thou wouldst struggle with the martyr for his stake, and bless heaven for the flames;—that is not an everlasting flame; that is not an unquenchable fire.’

How were we struck? Yet, soon after, still more. With what an eye of distraction, what a face of despair, he cried out:

‘My principles have poisoned my friend; my extravagance has beggared my boy; my unkindness has murdered my wife!—And is there another hell?—Oh! thou blasphemed, yet most indulgent Lord God! hell itself is a refuge, if it hides me from thy frown.’

Soon after, his understanding failed. His terrified imagination uttered horrors not to be repeated or ever

forgot. And, 'ere the sun (which, I hope, has seen few like him) arose, the gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched Altamont expired.

If this is a man of pleasure, what is a man of pain? How quick, how total is the transit of these Phaetontides! In what a dismal gloom they set for ever! How short, alas! the day of their rejoicing! For a moment they glitter, they dazzle. In a moment, where are they? Oblivion covers their memories, Ah! would it did! Infamy snatches them from oblivion. In the long-living annals of infamy their triumphs are recorded. Their sufferings still bleed in the bosom (poor Altamont!) of the heart-stricken friend: for Altamont had a friend. He might have had many. His transient morning might have been the dawn of an immortal day. His name might have been gloriously inrolled in the records of eternity. His memory might have left a sweet fragrance behind it, grateful to the surviving friend, and salutary to the succeeding generation. With what capacities was he endowed, with what advantages, for being greatly good? But with the talents of an angel, a man may be a fool. If he judges amiss in the supreme point, judging right in all else but aggravates his folly; as it shews him wrong, though blessed with the best capacity of being right.

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The P E R F I D I O U S L O V E R S :

O R

The H I S T O R Y of CLARINDA.

CLARINDA was the daughter of a gentleman of fortune in the county of——: she excelled most of her sex in beauty: her eyes displayed the lustre of the diamond; her skin the fairness of the lilly; her features were delicate, her air majestic and divine; and what above all made these perfections more truly valuable, was, that they were not the work of art, but of nature. She had good sense, an acquired judgment, and every other accomplishment that affluence and a parent's fondness could bestow.

Florio, a young gentleman of considerable family and fortune, and a neighbour to Clarinda, took all opportunities of being in her company: he fell violently in love with her, but his passion was founded only on personal charms. Her father encouraged his visits, as he wished for an alliance with Florio's family; and though at first they were disagreeable to Clarinda, the frequency of them, and the entreaties of her father to accept him for a lover, rendered them by degrees agreeable; especially, as at every meeting, he expressed his passion with great tenderness and fervency. Clarinda believed him a man of virtue, as he vowed his soul was enraptured with an honourable love. He swore so frequently to the sincerity of his intentions, that the beauteous fair one was at length persuaded to believe, without reciprocal love on her side, he would be wretched.

She resolved to encourage his addresses; partly in obedience to her father, and partly out of gratitude, arising from his promises of love and friendship. The

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consideration of these things, prompted her to give him every assurance of her regard and esteem for him. Innocent freedoms, with a mixture of the most tender and delicate expressions passed at every meeting. But oh! one luckless hour! he found the fair innocent seated in a shady grove belonging to her father's garden, in a moment when her mind was fitted to give, and to receive the soul-dissolving bliss of love!—What a pity, that there are in life such loose unguarded minutes, when tenderness melts down the soul and leaves the breast too open to deceivers!—

Such was the time, when softly stealing to the grove, Florio found her there; and as she sat reclined, he pressed the charmer's hand, kissed it with ardency, and begged; with love-beguiling tears, she would fix the day to make him happy.—She was greatly affected with the earnestness of his solicitations;—he saw her soften, kissed her blushing cheek, called it the golden minute of his life, and gently pressed her snowy bosom.—Such fondness at this time, had an improper effect upon her; she yielded to she knew not what. He vulture like, fiercely seized the unguarded opportunity, long waited, and long wished for, and robbed the tender fair one of her virtue!—

Alas! poor innocent! no sooner were they parted, but the thought of what had passed gave her soul distraction! hard was the task to conceal her distress of mind from the family, but shame and prudence for a time, prevented a discovery.—She reflected on his oaths of love, sincerity and constancy; and hoped she should have it in her power to secure the deceiver, and win him to fulfil them.—For a time, their meetings were as frequent and as affectionate as ever; and though she was obliged to submit to a continuance of what she at first too easily consented to, her soul abhorred the thought; but that it seemed the

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the likeliest means of securing him and her future happiness.——

She tenderly pressed him to marry her, for fear of approaching shame, and reasoned with him on the consequences of what had passed; he had always some evasive excuse for the present; yet, she fondly hoped, as her charms had first engaged his love, that they would still have sufficient power to secure him her's.——False, flattering hope! he soon was “fully satiated with the luscious banquet,” and went but seldom to her.——At length, “a cold indifference came:”——she saw the wretch no more!——

Judge her distraction when she found him false!——she hoped, she feared; at last——she found her fears too true.——Florio was paying his addresses to another. On the news of this Clarinda underwent the most agonizing torture the mind is capable of sustaining.——Her father perceiving her distress of mind, pressed her to know the cause, and that so tenderly, that she discovered the whole affair without the least reserve; for her heart was a stranger to hypocrisy or deceit.——The good old man, though greatly shocked, did not reproach her; well knowing such things are useless when they come too late; especially as he reflected it was at his request she first encouraged the perjured Florio.——He considered what step was best to be taken, and soon resolved to wait on his father, and endeavour to bring matters to a happy conclusion; but before this could be done, he received the news of Florio's marriage.——

Her father was greatly surprised, but judge the shock it gave the tender-hearted Clarinda, whose spirits were already too much depressed, to hope she could long survive this fatal period.——What was now the situation of her breast! O would these perjured false ones reflect on the inexpressible misery they cause in the

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minds of the fair ones, who yield to faithless vows their virgin innocence, they never could renounce the charming creatures. What a pitch of baseness is it, to sooth the fond believing maid with tender tales of love, and watch the unguarded minute to rob her of every thing that is dear and sacred to her!—What infamy to debauch a young innocent, under the specious pretences of love and honour!—how mean, ungenerous, and unjust, thus to treat the tender fair ones, sent as companions in the cares of life?

“The cordial drop, heav’n in our cup has thrown,
“To make the nauseous draught of life go down.”

The unhappy Clarinda was sunk into a melancholy, from which the entreaties of her friends were not able to extricate her. The affair soon became public, through the malevolence of impertinent curiosity; yet every one condemned the perjured Florio, every one pitied the injured Clarinda.

A young nobleman of the neighbourhood, who (though he had never seen her) was not unacquainted with her person and accomplishments, from the voice of fame; and being a lover of strict honour, and a friend to virtue, he was sensibly moved with the injury done so deserving a creature. He interested himself in the affair from a principle of humanity, and persuaded her father to demand satisfaction of Florio, for the violation of his daughter’s innocence and virtue; especially as it could be proved, by some letters sent to Clarinda, he had promised her marriage.—

His advice was seconded by every friend to Clarinda, to honour, and to virtue. They had a meeting at her father’s house to consult on proper methods
con-

concerning the prosecution. The young nobleman saw the charming Clarinda, and it is impossible to express his surprise and amazement. If from report he thought her beautiful, he now believed her more than woman, though she was greatly dejected by her present unhappy circumstances and distress. — It shocked his honest soul when he reflected on the injury she had received; and he wondered, so many charms of person and mind, were not sufficient to secure the false deceiver, or at least restrain him from the execution of his base purpose. The reflecting on her fallen condition, and the deep sense she appeared to have of it, inspired him with a love for her, rather than a disgust. He painted to his mind the happiness which must attend the possession of so divine a creature, and determined to make her his, notwithstanding what had happened.

This amiable young nobleman did not look on these things with a vulgar eye; he possessed an elevated soul above the common rank of men. He thought it no disgrace to marry a woman under Clarinda's circumstances: nor did he imagine it any reflection on his character to relieve the distresses of a worthy object; and above all, he was charmed with having it in his power to deliver a tender fair one from the contempt of the world, and inevitable ruin; being sensible the constant acknowledgments gratitude would teach her to make, would be one grand motive towards their connubial happiness.

He communicated his intention to her father, and asked his permission to address Clarinda. The old gentleman was greatly surprised, and received his offer with coldness, fearing it might prove the second undoing of his unhappy daughter; but considering his known character, and conversing more fully with him on the subject, every doubt was removed, and he

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gave his consent.—It was with great difficulty that Clarinda was brought to listen to the proposal. She was inclined to think the whole sex false; nor could she easily shake from her heart the love and esteem she had entertained for Florio, notwithstanding his perfidy and baseness.

Her new lover embraced every opportunity of seeing and conversing with her. By degrees she recovered her spirits, and inclined to favour his addresses. From every view he appeared a man of honour and integrity, and one who scorned to take any advantage of her misfortune. He perpetually declared the sincerity of his heart, and his affection for her, in such artless and honest terms, that she was charmed with him; nor doubted his honour; but though she listened to him with pleasure, she received his addresses with a becoming prudence, and constantly represented to him the probable consequences of his marrying a person of her fortune, and under such circumstances: that it most likely would draw the censures of the world on him, and be a means of his losing the favour and friendship of his relations at least.—This rather increased than abated his affection, and in a little time, he accomplished the summit of his wishes, and his kind promises to her, by making her his wife.

He is fond of her to an excess, and her love and gratitude teach her to please and to esteem him; and in so doing, they lead such happy lives as are the natural rewards of the virtuous and benevolent, from the dispensations of a gracious providence.—Thus we see, when a generous mind recompenses a favour received, it is hard to know whether the giver or receiver enjoys the greatest pleasure. Nor do I know a better piece of advice for the ladies than the moral of this story, which teaches them to be cautious whom they

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they trust, since a fierce love, caused by personal charms, is too often attended with fatal consequences: that the passion arising from beauty alone, generally deserves a much coarser name than love: that caution and modesty should be the companions of their courting hours; and that the more they give before marriage, the less they have to bestow after.



The DECEIVER DECEIVED.

IN a remote part of one of our distant counties, lived the beautiful Arabella, with her aged mother, Sophronia. This young lady had just attained the age of eighteen, and was reckoned a prodigy of beauty; but though she had charms that could excite the admiration of a court, yet she had modesty sufficient to repress her desire of exhibiting them to public view: she lived in solitude with her mother; bent all her care to obviate the wants of age, and to sooth the pillow of sickness: she knew nothing of the polite world, but from the relations of her parent, and seemed but little affected with the splendours of greatness. Thus blest in a life of innocence and happiness, she sought only from books that vicissitude of fortune which others court by experience.

It may be easily supposed, that such beauty had many lovers; but her fortune being very small, as she was an officer's daughter, and her mother subsisted chiefly on a pension, those who paid her their ad-

dressés in an honourable way, were too ignorant, or too mean, to satisfy either her taste or her ambition.

It happened that Florimore, a young gentleman of great accomplishments, had a large estate left him in that part of the kingdom that had served for the retreat of our beautiful recluse. Coming down to take possession, he accidentally saw her by the side of a beautiful wood that grew upon his demesne. As he had never before seen so much perfection, he was going to address the young lady in the familiar style of a superior; but reflecting that he had a character to support in the country he was come into, and that an intrigue with one beneath him, would quickly become the talk of the place, he resolved to go more cunningly to work, and endeavour, by disguising himself, to gain an intimacy with one he desired to possess as a mistress, but had too much pride to stoop to as a wife.

With this resolution, therefore, he the next day changed his dress, and equipped himself in the habit of one of these men who bring toys and other baubles about the country to sell. He was furnished with a box behind and a little basket before, in which his trinkets were disposed in a very orderly manner, while he assumed in gait and conversation the arch manner of those sort of people. His first attempt was to secure himself a lodging in a little publick-house near where the old gentlewoman dwelt, and here he continued for a day or two, giving directions to one of the servants of the house whom he had bribed for this purpose, to boast to the young lady of the great bargains that were to be bought, and the amazing beauty of the merchants commodities. This had the desired effect, and he was ordered to come and shew his wares before the old gentlewoman and her lovely daughter.

It

It may easily be supposed how happy the young lady was in turning over his trinkets, and how well pleased the old one was at the amazing bargains which he readily gave them. He was desired to renew his visits whenever he came that way again, and to let them have the first offer of such things as he brought into the country. He very gladly accepted the proposal, and in this manner repeated his visit several times. It was on one day with a parcel of the finest linens; at another, with the most elegant snuff-boxes; upon one occasion he would pretend to sell a piece of silk, upon another a beautiful necklace.

In this manner he continued to deceive the innocent couple; but, as it was natural, in his absence, for the young lady to shew her bargains to such as she happened to be acquainted with, among others she shewed them to an old gentleman in the neighbourhood, who was surprized at the beauty of every article, but particularly at a snuff-box which had been sold as a metal one, and which he knew to be true gold. This alarmed his suspicions, and he gave the old lady such instructions as would in some measure put her upon her guard in case their imaginary merchant should be an impostor, and have other designs than just commerce. She waited with impatience to put her project in execution, but it was not long before young Florimore repaired to his usual market place, with a basket of the most beautiful artificial Italian flowers, which could originally be purchased only at a large expence.

The innocent Arabella had now began every day to wait with impatience for the arrival of our young merchant, and by a thousand arts he by this time persuaded her of his attachment to her person. But he had introduced his professions of love with so much humility,

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humility, and testified so much disinterestedness, that he had actually produced a mutual flame in the breast of his charming dupe.

It was in one of these most agreeable interviews that Sophronia came to overhear their conversation, but was astonished to find that the subject of it was love. Concealing, however, her suspicions, she came up to Florimore; and, in terms of the warmest gratitude, thanked him for the many admirable presents he had made her daughter; and added, that, from the number of them which amounted to near the value of five hundred pounds, she was enabled to portion off Arabella to the son of a neighbouring gentleman who had long been passionately in love with her, but whose father had objected to the match, from pecuniary considerations. Such news was like a thunder stroke to the unfortunate Florimore, who was by this time deeply enamoured, and would have even consented to matrimony to complete his happiness. The old lady, however, pursued her triumph; and, perceiving his uneasiness, went on to observe, that the next day was that appointed for her daughter's wedding, and that she would be happy to see her benefactor among the number of her guests.

He at first refused; but she persisting in her demand, he was going to retire, but Sophronia caught him by his great coat, which giving way discovered, to the astonishment of both ladies, a star on the gentleman's breast, and a ribband from whence depended the badge of his order. We may easily suppose the consternation of all the parties; but Florimore, at length willing to make reparation by marriage, for his attempts to secure the young lady's virtue, offered her his hand and heart.

Both were joyfully accepted, as the old gentleman's story of another husband was merely artificial,
and

and used to bring a real confession from Florimore. Their nuptials, therefore, were actually celebrated the next day, and they now make the most happy couple in all that part of the country.



NOBLE FRIENDSHIP REWARDED:

O R,

DAMON AND PYTHIAS.

PLEASURE is, itself, an effect, and cannot be the cause, or principle, or motive to any thing; it is an agreeable sensation that arises, in any animal, on its meeting or contemplating an object that is suited to its nature. As far as the nature of such an animal is evil, evil objects can alone affect it with pleasure; as far as the nature of such an animal is good, the objects must be good whereby its pleasures are excited.

When Damon was sentenced by Dionysius of Syracuse, to die on such a day, he prayed permission, in the interim, to retire to his own country, to set the affairs of his disconsolate family in order. This the tyrant intended most peremptorily to refuse, by granting it, as he conceived, on the impossible conditions of his procuring some one to remain, as hostage for his return, under equal forfeiture of life. Pythias heard the conditions, and did not wait for an application on the part of Damon; he instantly offered himself to advance in the place of his friend, and Damon was accordingly set at liberty.

The king and all his courtiers were astonished at this action, as they could not account for it on any allowed

lowed principles. Self-interest, in their judgment, was the sole mover of human affairs ; and they looked on virtue, friendship, benevolence, love of country, and the like, as terms invented by the wise to impose upon the weak. They, therefore, imputed this act of Pythias to the extravagance of his folly, to the defect of head, merely, and no way to any virtue, or good quality of heart.

When the day of his destined execution drew near, the tyrant had the curiosity to visit Pythias in his dungeon. Having reproached him for the romantic stupidity of his conduct, and rallied him, some time, in his madness in presuming that Damon, by his return, would prove as great a fool as himself. " My lord," said Pythias, with a firm voice and noble aspect, " I would it were possible that I might suffer a thousand deaths, rather than my friend should fail in any article of his honour. He cannot fail therein, my lord. I am as confident of his virtue as I am of my own existence. But, I pray, I beseech the Gods to preserve the life and integrity of my Damon together. Oppose him, ye winds ! prevent the eagerness and impatience of his honourable endeavours ! and suffer him not to arrive till, by my death, I have redeemed a life, a thousand times of more consequence, more estimation, than my own ; more estimable to his lovely wife, to his precious little innocents, to his friends, to his country. O, leave me not to die the worst of deaths in my Damon !"

Dionysius was confounded and awed by the dignity of these sentiments, and by the manner (still more sentimental) in which they were uttered ; he felt his heart struck by a slight sense of invading truth, but it served rather to perplex than to undeceive him. He hesitated, he would have spoken, but he looked down, and retired in silence.

The

The fatal day arrived. Pythias was brought forth, and walked, amidst the guard, with a serious but satisfied air, to the place of execution.

Dionysius was already there. He was exalted on a moving throne that was drawn by six white horses, and sat pensive and attentive to the demeanour of the prisoner.

Pythias came. He vaulted lightly on the scaffold; and beholding for some time the apparatus of his death, he turned with a pleased countenance and addressed the assembly.

“ My prayers are heard,” he cried; “ the gods are
“ propitious! you know, my friends, that the winds
“ have been contrary till yesterday. Damon could
“ not come, he could not conquer impossibilities;
“ he will be here to-morrow, and the blood which
“ is shed to-day, shall have ransomed the life of
“ my friend. O, could I erase from your bosoms
“ every doubt, every mean suspicion of the honour
“ of the man for whom I am about to suffer, I should
“ go to my death even as I would to my bridal.
“ Be it sufficient, in the mean time, that my friend
“ will be found noble, that his truth is unimpeach-
“ able, that he will speedily approve it, that he is
“ now on his way, hurrying on, accusing himself,
“ the adverse elements, and the gods. But I haste
“ to prevent his speed; executioner to your office.”

As he pronounced the last words, a buzz began to arise among the remotest of the people. A distant voice was heard. The croud caught the words; and, “ stop, stop the execution!” was repeated by the whole assembly.

A man came at full speed. The throng gave way to his approach. He was mounted on a steed of foam. In an instant he was off his horse, on the scaffold, and held Pythias straitly embraced.

“ You

“ You are safe,” he cried, “ you are safe, my friend,
 “ my beloved; the gods be praised, you are safe!
 “ I now have nothing but death to suffer, and I am
 “ delivered from the anguish of those reproaches
 “ which I gave myself, for having endangered a life
 “ so much dearer than my own.”

Pale, cold, and half speechless in the arms of his
 Damon, Pythias replied in broken accents,—“ fatal
 “ haste!—cruel impatience!—what envious
 “ powers have wrought impossibilities in your fa-
 “ vour?—But, I will not be wholly disappointed—
 “ Since I cannot die to save, I will not survive you.”

Dionysius heard, beheld, and considered all with
 astonishment. His heart was touched. His eyes
 were opened; and he could no longer refuse his assent
 to truths so incontestably approved their facts.

He descended from his throne. He ascended the
 scaffold. “ Live, live, ye incomparable pair!” he
 exclaimed, “ Ye have borne unquestionable testimo-
 “ ny to the existence of virtue, and that virtue equal-
 “ ly evinces the certainty of the existence of a God
 “ to reward it. Live happy, live renowned! and,
 “ O, form me by your precepts, as ye have invited
 “ me by your example, to be worthy of the parti-
 “ cipation of so sacred a friendship.

FATAL CONSEQUENCES
OF
MISPLACED LOVE.

THE generality of young women when they once get a lover in their heads, imagine that their relations are the most cruel creatures in the world, unless they give an immediate consent to every absurdity of their inclinations, and bestow them at once with a considerable fortune upon the sweet fellow who has thus happily made himself master of their affections. If a parent pretends to any authority, he instantly, from a tender father is looked upon as an absolute tyrant; and pretty miss very dutifully wishes him fifty fathom under ground, that she may have a handsome sum of money to throw away upon a rascal, whom she has not possibly known for above a month or six weeks.

I am, you must know, a miserable woman, whom a partiality of this nature for a most infamous villain, has plunged into the deepest distress. About five years ago, sir, I lived with my father, a benefited Clergyman in the north of England, and had every reason to be satisfied, that the happiness of the venerable old gentleman's life was placed in mine, from the excessive tenderness with which he constantly treated me, and from the enjoyments of which he debarred himself, merely to lay up a fortune for my advancement in the world. I was his only child; and
though

though my mother died while I was quite an infant, he never would alter his condition, for fear, as he kindly expressed it, he might place a very different sort of woman over his poor Isabella.

I had scarcely turned my twenty-first year, when a company of strolling players came into our neighbourhood, a principal of which being an excellent scholar, and master of a very genteel address, had a letter of recommendation to my father, from a brother Clergyman in the last town where they exhibited. My father, who was benevolence itself, though he did not greatly approve of such a guest, nevertheless desired him out of compliment to his friend to stay to dinner, and assured him of his best services whenever the benefits came to be advertised. Mr. Villars, the comedian, thanked him in a handsome manner, and we soon after sat down to table, where the designing hypocrite, by a behaviour the most specious and polite, and by an unassuming pretence to all the virtues with which he was utterly unacquainted, soon got the better of my father's reserve, and not a little silenced the contempt which I had always entertained for those itinerant dependants on the theatre. Not to be minutely circumstantial, suffice it, that Villars received an invitation no less warm than general to our house, and in less than a week, made such good use of my father's hospitality, as entirely to captivate the affections of his inexperienced daughter, and to fill her with an insuperable aversion to the happy habitation, in which for her whole life she had been so carefully brought up.

I was too much a novice, however, in the business of amour, to keep the matter so perfectly concealed from the eyes of a father, who in his youth had been remarkably well received among the Ladies, as I could

could wish : he saw with what eagerness I hung upon every syllable that fell from Villars, and remarked with concern, that unless Villars was in the house, I studiously avoided his company. One Sunday afternoon, therefore, while I imagined he was at church, he unexpectedly darted from a closet in the very room where Villars and I were exchanging vows of everlasting fidelity ; and ordering my lover, with a look of indignation, never to come again into his presence, desired me immediately to retire to my room.

Though shame and confusion kept me silent in the presence of my father, I was nevertheless no sooner alone, than I began to think his behaviour a very unjustifiable piece of barbarity : all the care and anxiety which for more than twenty years he had manifested for my welfare, was immediately banished from my remembrance. I looked upon him as the greatest enemy I had in the world ; and full of nothing but the ideas of my adorable Villars I determined, like the inconsiderate, the unnatural monster I was, to quit the man who gave me being, who educated me with the nicest circumspection, and of whose worth I was perfectly convinced ; to go off with a fellow, who for aught I knew might be a highwayman ; to whom I never owed an obligation, and whose person I had never seen till the week before, in which he so unfortunately brought a recommendation to my father's.

Before I had time to execute this dutiful project, however, my unhappy father came up to my room, and looking at me for some time with an air of inexpressible anguish, at last burst into a flood of tears. When he had somewhat recovered himself, " O Isabella, said he, little did I think to have seen such a day as this ; and little did I imagine you would ever give me cause to regret the hour of your birth. In
what

what part of my duty, tell me, child, has there been a deficiency to occasion so fatal a negligence in yours? What has your father done, that you wish to shake off every sentiment of nature and affection; and desire to fly from the arms which have cherished you from the first moment of your existence, to refuge with a villain, whom you have not known above ten or a dozen days. In the alienation of your affections, has he hesitated to break the sacred laws of friendship and hospitality, or scrupled to put on the awful form of virtue to prosecute the most infamous ends? While I entertained him with the greatest cordiality, he was doing me the most irreparable injury; and when I harboured him most in my bosom, like the venomous adder, the more deeply he stung me to the heart. And will you, Isabella, instead of revenging the cause of so injured, and I hope I may say, so tender a parent, become yourself accessory to the destruction of my happiness: will you be guilty of a parricide to reward an assassin, who has attempted more than my life; and shall it be said that a common-place compliment to her beauty is of more consideration to so sensible a young lady, than the everlasting tranquillity of her father? Alas, my child, let not your youth and inexperience lead you into an irretrievable mistake. The man that would be guilty of a crime to engage your affections, would not stop at a crime to cast you off, when time and possession had rendered you less attractive to his imagination. Consider my dear, the man who courts you to quit your father's house, is interested in his solicitations. I cannot be interested. He wants you to gratify his *own* purposes; whereas I have no end to answer but the advancement of *your* felicity; and am willing to contract every enjoyment of my life, for the sake of building that felicity on a permanent foundation. As
I am

I am determined never to lay a restraint upon your inclinations, weigh well the advice I have given you. You are now a woman by the laws of the land, and your person is at your own disposal: if therefore tomorrow morning, after having maturely considered the affair, you can sacrifice your doating father for this inhospitable villain, pack up your cloaths and every thing else which belongs to you; go, and favour him with your hand at the altar of that God, who sees into the bottom of my afflictions, and do not incur the additional disgrace, of an infamous flight from a house in which you have been treated with such a continued excess of paternal indulgence. Remember, however, if such should be your resolution, that I am no more your father; in humble imitation of the Deity, by whom I hope to be forgiven, I here offer you a chearful forgiveness for what is past. But if you persevere, know that though my humanity may weep for your transgression, that justice will never permit me to reward it."

My father after this desired me to recollect, that I was far from being destitute of admirers, that three or four young Gentlemen of agreeable persons, unexceptionable characters, and handsome fortunes, had for a considerable time paid me their addresses; and that consequently I could not have even the ridiculous plea of being *neglected*, to palliate my attachment for the object whom I had so preposterously distinguished by my choice. Saying this, he left me with an air of dejected resolution; and taking his horse, rode off a few miles to the house of an intimate acquaintance, where he lay that night, as if he was unwilling to throw the shadow of an impediment in the way of my determination.

It is no easy circumstance to describe the situation of my heart at this behaviour of my farther: He convinced

vinced my reason, but at the same time he alarmed my pride; and I absurdly imagined, that it would be a derogation from my own dignity if I offered to make him the least concession, after he had thus indirectly commanded me to quit his house. Presumption is always the daughter of indulgence; where children have been treated with an excess of tenderness, they most commonly think it very insolent in a parent if he happens to tell them of any little mistake; and are wonderfully ready to expect a most punctual performance of his duty, however remiss they themselves may be in the discharge of their own. Unhappily for me, I was one of those hopeful children: accustomed to nothing but the heart-directed blandishments of paternal affection, I could not bear the accent of reproach, though conscious of its being merited; and thought that my father should have made me a submissive apology; though it certainly would have done me the greatest credit if I had fallen at his feet, and implored his forgiveness with a torrent of tears.

While I was thus agitated between the sober remonstrances of my reason, and the unnatural workings of my pride, Villars, who had waited at a little ale-house in the neighbourhood, to watch the motions of our family, no sooner saw my father's back, than he boldly came up to the house, and prest me in the most passionate manner to embrace that opportunity of packing up my little all, and escaping from the tyranny of a man, who made no other use of his authority than to render me perpetually miserable.—

“Parents, my charming Miss Brandon, (said the artful villain) imagine they do mighty things if they give a young lady a decent room, a tolerable gown, and treat her now and then with a box at the theatre; this they call an excess of tenderness, and think a very meri-

meritorious discharge of their duty: but see the strange inconsistency of their characters; though they so readily allow her to please herself in little things, yet they absolutely deny her a will in the most material article of all, and permit the mere amusement of an hour, with no other view but to claim such an authority over her inclinations as may render her miserable for life." These sentiments, joined to the fascinating importunity of the fellow, did my business compleatly; I set about packing up my cloathes and trinkets in an instant, and in less than two hours was entirely out of sight, glowing all the way with a revengeful sort of satisfaction, to think how mortified my father must be, when he found I had so chearfully taken him at his word.

As it would not be prudent for Mr. Villars to stay in the neighbourhood when our affair became any way public, we quitted the country with the utmost expedition, and by the following evening arrived at a considerable town near an hundred miles off, in which a strolling company was at that time performing, from whom Mr. Villars had received several very pressing letters, requesting him to join them, and offering him by much the most capital cast of all the characters. At this place we were married the morning after our arrival; and to my everlasting infamy I mention it, no one reflection of what might be felt at home, was once suffered to discredit the festival with a sigh.

I had not however been many weeks married before I found a very material alteration in the behaviour of my husband; instead of the good humour and complaisance which he formerly assumed, he treated me with nothing but a round of the most silent furliness or the most sarcastic contempt. If he talked sometimes, it was of having thrown himself away; and in

proportion as our circumstances became contracted, the players had but very little business, and the principal part of my wardrobe was now disposed of, he was base enough even to reproach me with running away from my father. I now saw, when it was too late, the imprudence of my conduct, and would have given the world, had I been mistress of it, to call back the days of my former tranquillity. I perceived clearly that Villars's sole motive in ever addressing me, was the consideration of my father's opulence; he saw me an only child, and naturally imagined, that though the venerable old gentleman might be offended with me at first, he would nevertheless quickly relent, and take me again to the arms of his affection, as a daughter. With this view he obliged me to send home letters upon letters, all expressing the deepest penitence of my fault, and painting the wretchedness of our situation in colours the most affecting. A post scarcely went for several weeks, but what carried some petition of this nature; and perhaps I might have continued writing considerably longer, had not the following note been at last sent, in answer to my various epistles.

To Mrs. VILLARS, at the Theatre in SHREWSBURY.

Madam,

“**W**HEN I had a daughter, she never spoke a word but gave me pleasure, nor mentioned a want which I did not fly to redress: you, madam, have robbed me of that daughter; yet after the barbarity of plunging a dagger in my bosom, are now mean enough to throw yourself at my feet, and to solicit my compassion for bread. In reality, I do not know whether I should most detest you for the inhumanity of your conduct on the one hand, or despise you

you for the baseness of your behaviour on the other; is it not enough to be guilty, but you must try to be despicable? For shame, Madam, exert a little more spirit and be uniformly culpable: talk as much of duty and affection to your husband as you please; but let not the heavy hand of necessity squeeze you into a paltry affectation of either, to a father, about whose heart you have twisted a thousand scorpions, and who probably before you receive this, may be ready for that grave, which you kindly opened for him on the sixth of last August. Trouble me I beseech you no more; I am familiar with your hand, and shall never open another letter of your writing; as you have disposed of your person, give me leave to dispose of *my* property; for be assured, no consideration on earth, shall tempt me to provide for a villain, or to mitigate the punishment which providence has in this world pronounced against filial disobedience. Could you abandon a father, and yet hope for felicity? Could you rise up against the fountain of your being, and yet form an idea of content! The very supposition is a blasphemy against heaven. Make therefore a proper use of your present chastisement, and rather rejoice at it as an happiness, than lament it as a misfortune; since, had you escaped the indignation of omnipotence in this world, there was but too just a foundation to expect an eternity of torment in the next.

HORACE BRANDON."

This letter, which my conscience convinced me was what I ought to have expected, putting an end to all our hopes, Mr. Villars no longer kept measures with me; he wanted money: money he would have; and even told me in very plain terms, I might that very night put him in possession of fifty guineas, if I would—

O, his proposal was a horrid one. A young gentleman of great fortune, had it seems praised me to his face; and knowing perhaps his character, taken the liberty of ——— I cannot enter into an explanation. ——— You may judge, with what a degree of united rage and astonishment, any woman must have heard such a circumstance from the husband of her heart. For my own part, though I had forfeited all pretensions to the filial character, I was yet tremblingly-alive in all my other relations. I received the overture therefore with the indignation it merited; and Mr. Villars, finding that neither the most soothing language of hypocrisy, nor the most vehement arguments of a horsewhip, were sufficient to alter my resolution, privately decamped in a few nights after, leaving me in a strange country, not only without a sixpence, but over head and ears in debt, and in a situation also that required the tenderest circumspection. This was too much; it brought on the pains of parturiency, and I was delivered of a boy, who happily for himself, poor orphan, died in a few hours after his birth. For me, I languished a long time in the most deplorable circumstances, and must have inevitably perished, had it not been for the humanity of the company, who notwithstanding their own distresses were extremely urgent, nevertheless strained a point to relieve mine; and when my health was somewhat established, enlisted me at a full share, though I had never before appeared in any thing but *Isabella*, in the *Innocent Adultery*.

In this way of life, Sir, I have ever since continued, not knowing how to better myself: was my heart at ease I might possibly entertain you with some very humorous circumstances. But alas, Sir, remorse is the only companion of my bosom. My unhappy father, who did not survive his letter three days, is ever present

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present to my remembrance ; and even Villars, greatly as he is the object of abhorrence to my reason, now and then draws a tear from my tenderness, and gives me a moment of distress ; he has for these four years been strolling with a company in various parts of the American plantations, and is lately married to a woman infinitely better calculated for his purposes, than the

UNFORTUNATE ISABELLA.



THE LADY OF THE CAVE:

In a Letter to ARABELLA.

Dear Arabella,

I Suppose by this time you begin to imagine that the gay Sylvian scenes of Hertfordshire have made me forgetful of every thing I left behind me in London ; but I do assure you, tho' I have been very much taken up in a way, perhaps, you little think of, that of doing good in my generation, I should not have been here ten whole days without writing, had it been in my power to have entertained you with any other subject, than one which I know is the most disagreeable of any.

In fine, I have seen you too much alarmed at every story that has been told of apparitions, to send you an account of one from the country ; but as the danger is over, and I can now affirm, that a spirit, which has made a great noise here, is found to be real flesh and

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blood existing, I may venture to give you the narrative, not only as an amusement, but also as I am in hopes it may contribute to rid you of those vain apprehensions, by shewing you on what slight foundations, tales of this nature are generally built.

I know not how it comes to pass, but I have observed in most country places where I have been, the people are strangely infatuated with a belief of ghosts and spirits: according to them, every town, nay, almost every village, has its particular dæmon, which haunts lone walks, and gloomy forests; but till my coming down this time, I never heard talk of any such thing in these parts, and therefore was now the more surprized to find, on my arrival, every one in the extremest terror, on account of an apparition, which they told me appeared even at noon-day in Broxbon wood. This spirit, they said, had the form of a woman, was in white robes, and sometimes seemed to glitter all over like a star. They added, that while at a distance, she only glided along very slow between the trees of that thick forest, but when any person had courage to go nearer to her, moved much faster, and by degrees vanished. As she had been never seen in any other place, they gave her the name of the White Devil of Broxbon wood. Not one of our family, except my uncle and aunt, who are both confined to their chamber, he by a fit of the gout, and she, by her complaisance in keeping him company, but what affirmed they had seen this phantom various times; but though none of them pretend they have received any hurt from it, or that it ever assumed any frightful shape, yet the thoughts that one from the dead was come among them, put them into such a panic, that it was not without great difficulty, any of them could be prevailed upon to go to the next market town for provisions, there being no other way, than

than through the wood, and some even chose to lose their places, rather than hazard encountering the White Devil.

I endeavoured all I could to reason those creatures into more courage. I represented to them, that in case there were any such thing in reality, as the spirits of deceased persons being permitted to appear, how improbable it was that they should quit the mansions of eternal rest, and revisit the earth, only to shew themselves, and scare those who were once their fellow-creatures, without any other business, or errand whatsoever; but all this was talking to the wind: they insisted that it was a ghost they had seen, would by no arguments be put off from their belief, and no doubt thought me very prophane for making so slight of it: in a word, the story was so much attested, and by such numbers, that my uncle himself, though a man the farthest in the world from superstition, told me he knew not well what to think of it, and wished he were able to walk out himself, in order to form a better judgment. For my part I could not forbear laughing at the whole, and urged that it was certainly either a woman, who lived on the other side of the wood, and came to indulge her melancholy in that solitary recess, or else somebody who walked there with a design to impose on weak minds, and divert itself at the expence of their credulity. To which he replied, that the latter of these suggestions might probably be right; but as to the former, he had been at the pains of sending to all the gentlemen's seats near that place, and was well assured there was no person in any of them, that amused herself in that manner; but, on the contrary, many on the other side of the wood had also seen it, and were equally terrified and amazed.

All this would not persuade me to believe any thing of the matter, and having been used to walk frequently in this wood whenever I came to my uncle's, would not now deny myself that pleasure, though much I found was said of my presumption in so doing. But I was obliged to exert all my authority to get my maid along with me, the stories she had been told having rendered her as much a coward, as the most timid of them all. She durst not, however, absolutely refuse, and so followed me; but though we went a considerable way into this formidable place, even much farther than I had ever done before in my life, we met no ghost, nor any thing to justify the accounts that had been given us of one; so that she began to assume resolution enough, not only to attend me cheerfully the next time we walked, but also to rally those who still persisted in their belief.

It was either the third or the fourth day, I cannot be positive which, that we were rambling as usual, when happening to have forgot my snuff-box, I sent her back to fetch it, promising, at the same time, that I would not quit the place she left me in, till her return. She obeyed, though I could perceive with a reluctance, which some remains of fear occasioned in her; I sat down at the foot of a large oak, in one of the thickest parts of the wood. I had not been in this posture above six minutes, before I was surprized with the sound of a very harmonious voice, singing at some distance, yet near enough for me to hear the words, which were these:

Give me love, and liberty :
 From an iron grate,
 And the man I hate,
 Dear fortune set me free.

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On this I turned my head, and plainly enough discerned through the branches of the trees, somewhat that appeared like a woman, and habited, as they had said, in white garments, which seemed to flow loose in the wind; her back was towards me, and she seemed moving farther, but in a quite careless degagee manner, and still continued singing: as I doubted not but this was the apparition so much talked of, I resolved to find the truth, if possible. If it be a ghost, said I to myself, it is certainly a very harmless, merry one. I do not tell you, however, that I did not feel some little palpitation, but I got the better of it; and rising with as little noise as I could, went in the same tract, the White Thing (for I knew not what to call it) pushed on before me. It was when I first got up, as I said before, a good distance from me, but upon the rustling my cloaths made among the shrubs, as I suppose, left off singing, and moved considerably faster, as the people affirmed it always did at the approach of any one: at length it ran with so much swiftness, that I was obliged to do so too, or must have soon lost sight of it, and then might have imagined with others, that it had the power of becoming invisible whenever it pleased. My feet, however, were nimble enough to enable my eyes to pursue it quite out of the wood, into a great wide common, where, on coming to a pretty high hill, it escaped me on the other side; but fully persuaded in my mind that I should recover it again, as soon as I got over the present impediment which barred my view, I redoubled the race I had taken. But here I found myself deceived. I easily ascended this mount, which commanded the whole common, but neither saw what I was in chase of, nor any house, hut, grove, nor even thicket, where any creature could be concealed; this indeed alarmed me; loath I was to think the

figure I had seen was any thing more than mortal, yet could conceive no natural means by which it should elude my sight, in such an instant, for at most I could not have been, during the whole pursuit, more than fifty yards behind.

I descended slowly, still throwing my eyes from side to side, though now without hope of recovering what I had lost, when, as I was deeply musing on this adventure, I was struck on a sudden with something that looked like smoke, coming out of the side of the hill I had just come over. On which I drew near, and found it was so indeed, and that near the hole whence it proceeded, there was an opening cut out of the earth, which seemed as if a passage to some subterranean cavern. You will allow I had good courage to attempt exploring the secrets of such a place, yet did I venture to go in, though it was so low at the entrance, that I was obliged to stoop almost double. As I advanced a few paces, I found it, however, somewhat more lofty, and I proceeded for I believe three times the length of myself, till I came into a pretty wide place, but would have been entirely dark, only for a lamp which burned at one corner of it, and which plainly discovered to me the form I had pursued, sitting just opposite to me, and a woman holding a basin to her, in which she was washing her hands. The light was so disposed, that she could not avoid seeing me, and starting up came forward in a good deal of confusion. Indeed I was in little less, but stammered out as handsome an apology as I could for my intrusion; by the time I had done speaking, she had recovered herself enough to reply, though (said she, in the most obliging accents) I neither desired nor could expect any guests in a place such as this, where I flattered myself with being effectually hid from all the world, yet as you are of my own sex,
and

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and have the appearance of one who will be far from doing me a prejudice, such welcome as it is in my power to give, you may command. With these words she took me by the hand, and in the most polite manner led me to a seat, ordering her attendant at the same time to get more light.

Her commands were no sooner given than obeyed: two large candles were immediately lighted, and I had a full prospect of every thing about me, but the lady herself for a time engrossed my attention too much to regard any thing beside: she was not what one may call a perfect beauty, but yet much more lovely than many I have seen who are celebrated for such; her age seemed not to exceed fifteen, and, as I was afterwards informed, had not yet attained to that; but she was tall, admirably well-shap'd, had a fine complexion, and somewhat of an uncommon vivacity in her eyes, which gave a lustre to her whole frame: she had on a Robe de Chambre, of white lutestring, shot with silver, which doubtless it was that had acquired her the name of the White Devil, and also made those who happened to see her in the sun-shine say, she had the glitter of a star. I could not help smiling at the thoughts of what had been told me; which she taking notice of, I frankly related to her the rumours her appearance had occasioned, the fright the country people were in, and the whole motives of that curiosity she had been so good to pardon. She laughed excessively at it, but assured me that though she ought to be sorry for having been the cause of so much terror and confusion, yet it would be impossible for her to regret it very much, if good nature would excite me to a continuance of those visits my curiosity had begun; and to engage you to this act of compassion, pursued she, I must entreat you to believe no dishonourable action, nor even the

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view of any, has made me seek a shelter in this cave. I replied, that they must have a very small share of penetration, who needed the testimony of her words, for what her appearance alone was a sufficient proof.

After some few civilities of this sort, I would have taken my leave, but she desired, as it was the hour for tea, I would give her the pleasure of my company. I must confess I was a little startled at the name of tea, for I could not imagine by what magic art any such thing could be prepared in the place we were; for I will now acquaint you with the furniture of it. There was neither grate, chair, nor table; hoops of osier twisted together, somewhat like the wicker, of which baskets are made, laid cross-ways, one above another, supporting a long piece of board, from one end of the cave to the other, served as a bench, and was what we both were seated upon: an old tub, turned the bottom upwards, supplied the place of a table, and that fire, the smoke of which had been my director, was contained between two little piles of broken bricks. The candles, which were lighted up at my approach, were stuck in pieces of clay, with holes in them, and made flat at the bottom. A great cupboard, that seemed of the same age with Noah's ark, with two bundles rolled up, and disposed in different angles, which, as I afterwards understood, were the beds on which the family reposed, compleated all the moveables of the apartment. Yet, notwithstanding this wretched appearance, we had our tea served very elegantly. The maid brought a decanter, with water clear as the chrystal that inclosed it, and having set it on the fire, laid a clean damask napkin over the tub-table, and plated a tea-pot, two cups and saucers, with a sloop-bason of as fine china as I ever saw. This done, she fetched from the antique cupboard a tea-chest, richly inlaid with mother of pearl and amber,

out

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out of which she took a silver canister, and gold spoons. We had also exceeding good cake; but the plate in which it was presented, was not at all of a piece with the rest of the equipage; it was a coarse earthen ware, and had the misfortune to have lost more than one half the brim.

So many contradictions joined to make an oddity which I could not imagine a possibility of accounting for. The young lady easily saw into my thoughts, and as soon as our repast was ended, told me she would not deprive me any longer of the light of the sun, but attend me, if I would give her leave, into the wood: I own the proposal was very agreeable to me, and we walked together till we came to a grove, formed by the hand of nature, and more beautiful than art could have made it: there we sat down, and after ushering in what she was about to say, with some compliments on the motives which this first interview had given her, of a perfect confidence in my sincerity, unfolded the whole mystery of her retirement, and all that had so much surprized me in beholding.

She told me she was the daughter of ———, by whom she was promised in her infancy to the ———, but that as she grew up, she could not be prevailed upon to entertain any sentiments, but those of an implacable aversion for her intended bridegroom. That she had endeavoured, by prayers and tears, not only to her father, but also by declaring her hatred to himself, to convince both, of the miseries such an union must produce; but all without the least effect. ——— found an advantage to his family by the match, and was obstinate in his resolution; nor would the ——— recede from his pretensions, either because he really loved her, or that his pride would not suffer him to be disappointed in a thing every body supposed him certain of possessing. As she was now looked upon

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upon of sufficient years, the wedding-day was appointed, and she saw the preparations making for it, with a horror which determined her to run all hazards, rather than it should be compleated. Finding no way to avoid it, but to quit her father's house, she resolved on doing so; but to whom to have recourse she knew not, not daring to go to any of her friends or kindred, as she was certain search would be made for her in every house which could be suspected to give her shelter. In this distress she communicated all to her woman, who told her she had a kinsman in Hertfordshire, who had indeed but an ordinary habitation, yet such a one as might conceal her till the search should be entirely over, and she might then repair to such of her relations who had the most influence over her father, in order to bring about a reconciliation. Never, said she, had I known so much transport, as this proposal gave me. We set immediately about packing up a little bundle of linen, and some few necessaries, which I thought the mean place I was going to, would not be able to supply me with; and the next morning, by day break, got out of the house, without being seen by any of the family, and came down in the Hertford stage. Her kinsman, she told me, lived within two small miles of that town, which we easily walked to; but how greatly was I disappointed, when being arrived, we were told that his goods had long ago been seized for rent; that he had been turned out of his house, with all his family; and that no body caring to receive them on account of their poverty, he had been obliged to dig himself a cave, where he soon after died of grief, but that his wife still lived in the same place: they then directed us, continued she, to the cave where you found me, which I thought it better to content myself with, than to go to any inn, where I might have been seen
by

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by some one who had known me, and my servant had no acquaintance besides this poor widow, in all these parts. She added, that it was a fortnight since she came, and did not dare to quit it as yet.

After thanking her for the confidence she reposed in me, I asked her several questions concerning her manner of life, and what she did for provisions? To which she replied, that the widow went every day to Ware, and brought her in wherewith to support nature, which was all she desired, or could expect while in her state of exile.

She gave me this detail with so much chearfulness, and interspersed it with so many pleasantries, that it is easy to see her misfortunes had taken no effect upon her spirits; it growing towards sun-set when she had finished, I was obliged to take my leave, but not without a promise of meeting her the next morning in the same grove.

You may imagine, dear Arabella, with how much triumph in my mind I came home, on account of the discovery I had made of the supposed spirit. I found my dear Abigail at the edge of the wood, with two or three of my uncle's servants, who had been sent in quest of me, after she had missed me at the place I had ordered her to come to. They doubted not but the spirit had run away with me; but my uncle and aunt were in pain, lest some other ill accident had befallen me. My appearance, however, made all things easy, and I related the whole story, in the same manner I have done to you, only concealed the names and quality of the persons concerned from all but my uncle and aunt, whose discretion I too well knew to make a doubt of, or that they would not do as I earnestly wished in my heart, which was to invite this distressed young lady to their house. I had no sooner finished my narration, then they cried out both together,
“Why

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“Why, niece, did you not bring her from that wretched place?” I told them, it was a liberty I could not presume to take, but since they had given me authority, I would let her know the favour they intended her, the next day.

To conclude ; I obeyed their commands, and the dictates of my own inclination. She is now with us. I am quite charmed with my new friend ; she seems no less so with me ; and if she thinks I have done her any service, in removing her from so incommodious a situation, I know myself well repaid in her polite and agreeable conversation. My aunt is equally pleased with her, and my uncle takes so much part in her distress that though he is still very lame, he resolves to go to London some day this week, and try how far her father is to be won ; I mean as to breaking off the intended marriage ; for on no other terms does she desire a reconciliation, but will sooner forgo all the hopes to which her birth intitles her, and get her bread by service, than ever yield to become the wife of the —.

Yours,

CARICLEA.

THE

To ARABELLA, with a farther
account of the LADY of the CAVE.

THE concern you express for our young guest, and impatience for the sequel of her adventures, is so great a proof of your good-nature, that it would be unpardonable in me not to give you all the satisfaction in my power; but that is as yet so little, that I should scarce have wrote, but to shew my readiness to obey your commands. I think, for my part, every thing belonging to this lady must be mysterous, and that whoever interest themselves in her affairs, must also take a fancy to deal in ambiguities: but that I may not seem to do so too, I will relate in a few words all we know here of the matter.

My uncle set out on his expedition last Monday was sevensnight. His first letter gave an account of his safe arrival, but no more; nor indeed could any more be expected from that. The second, which was about five days after, related that he had seen M—, that he had been extremly well received by him, and did not doubt but every thing would be accommodated agreeable to the Lady of the Cave; for so he always calls her. Since this, we heard nothing from him, till last night, when a large portmanteau, with a great many rich suits of cloathes, and other wearing-apparel, which she had no opportunity of bringing away with her, came down by the stage-coach, and with it a third letter to my aunt, wherein my uncle desires her to prepare the most elegant entertainment the country can furnish out, against next Friday, on which day he proposes being at home, and says he shall bring

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bring with him a stranger of condition, and for whom he has a particular esteem.——He then tells her, she may acquaint the young lady, that she must prepare to receive him as the person who has now the sole power over her; that her father has invested him with all his authority, by way of guardian, and adds, in very humorous terms, that she must not flatter herself with escaping from him, in case he should happen to enjoin any thing she might not so well relish. All this we can make nothing of; but by the air of merriment, which runs through the whole, have no room to doubt but that he is very much pleased, and has succeeded in his negotiation, though we are entirely in the dark, by what means, or on what conditions.

The poor young lady is, however, in very great agitations; she trembles lest this stranger, who comes down with my uncle, should be her father, and that under the pretence of being reconciled, he should take her home with him, and compel her at last to marry the——: neither my aunt, nor myself, omit any thing in our power to put other thoughts into her head, but all we can say is insufficient to make her easy. She can no way conceive for what reason her father should delegate his authority over her while living, to any other person; and this it is, which chiefly makes her fear my uncle has been imposed upon by a feigned condescension on his part.

But I am too well assured of my uncle's good sense and penetration, to harbour the least thought of his being capable of suffering so gross a deception to pass upon him; nor is it indeed probable, that the other would attempt to treat a person of his rank and character in the world in such a manner. We are all, notwithstanding, in a good deal of suspense, and long for Friday with as much impatience as ever a young

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young heir did for the arrival of dear one-and-twenty, or a bridegroom for the wedding-night.

When relieved from this uneasy situation, you may depend on being informed of the result, as soon as the post can bring it from,

Dear Arabella,

Yours,

CARICLEA.

From the same to A R A B E L L A, with the sequel of the adventure contained in the two former.

THE riddle is at last explained. My uncle is returned, and has brought with him—I will not tell you who, till I have prepared you to give him that welcome in your imagination, which he certainly deserves. Besides, it would be letting you into the plot too soon, and destroying that surprize, which so much heightens the beauty of any great catastrophe. Gradually then to begin; my uncle no sooner got to London, than he went to M—, whom he found in a good deal of perplexity, not only on account of the little hope he had of recovering his daughter, but also on that of some consequences her elopement had occasioned, which he did not as yet think fit to mention. My uncle told him, he had casually heard of a young lady, who was said to be concealed at the house of one of his intimate friends, and having good reasons for suspecting it was his daughter, he had taken the liberty to wait on him, in order to assure him that, in case the person he meant was really she,

she, he need be under no apprehensions that she had flown from his authority, on any motive which could bring dishonour on his family; and then proceeded to excuse this act of disobedience in her, by remonstrating how impossible it was for any considerations to overcome an aversion, grounded on a natural antipathy, and the ill effects which forced marriages, for the most part, produce.

M—— heard him with a great deal of patience, and then told him, that he had not so strenuously insisted on his daughter's obedience in this point, on the score of any advantage he proposed by the marriage, but merely to comply with the promise he had given to the——; for in truth, said he, I have heard some things of late concerning him, which had I known before, I never should have approved of the alliance. To these he added many other expressions, which made my uncle see that a reconciliation between them would not be difficult to accomplish; and having brought him entirely into the disposition he wished, at length ventured to inform him, that to his certain knowledge, the young lady he had mentioned, was no other than his daughter; but at the same time told him, that he must not expect to be made acquainted with the place of her retreat, till he had given his word and honour to forgive her, and to make no use of his authority as a parent to force her inclinations. To this, the other said he would readily agree, provided still her conduct, since her quitting his house, had given him no fresh subject of complaint against her.

My uncle thought there needed no more from a person who he found was nicely tenacious of his promises, and immediately related the whole story of her concealment in the cave, how I had found her there, and afterwards at his desire brought her home with me.

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me. The good old gentleman, it seems, listened to this recital with tears of joy, and as soon as it was ended, embraced my uncle, said he never could sufficiently acknowledge the obligations he had to him, called him the saviour of his daughter's honour, and that of their whole family, and swore he should always regard him with much more than a brotherly affection.

Such extraordinary demonstrations of gratitude, for an action, which in reality was no more than common humanity would have obliged any man to, very much embarrassed my uncle; he was not sorry, however, to find the impression it made on him, because it could not but facilitate the good work he had so happily begun. Indeed there now required no more solicitations; the father threw off all reserve, and frankly owned, that as things had happened, he was so far from being troubled his daughter had been guilty of swerving from that duty, she had in every other article observed towards him, that he rather looked on what she had done, as inspired by divine providence. "For a girl of her years, said he, to run all hazards, expose herself to all dangers, rather than become the wife of a man, whose exterior form has nothing to create so strong an aversion, seems to me to have something supernatural in it; and I must think it was by the direction of her guardian angel, that she took this only method to avoid a man, whom I am now well convinced she never could have been happy with, even had her love for him been equal to her hate."

All this a little astonished my uncle; but the other soon put an end to the suspense he was in, by telling him on what occasion his sentiments were changed, so much to the reverse of what they been.

It

It seems, some little time before it was publicly known that M—— had resolved to dispose of his daughter to the ——, a young gentleman of family, equal in fortune to him, and much his superior in accomplishments and personal graces, came to demand permission to make his addresses to that young beauty; but the father was obliged to reject his offers, on account of his promise being already given; on which the other desisted. The father, however, after her elopement, was not without some apprehensions, she had privately encouraged the passion of this new lover, and might possibly return it in a manner, no way to the advantage of her character; till the rivals happening to meet, in public company, and some talk of her coming on the carpet, the —— spoke of her in terms highly injurious, which the other, who truly loved, though without hopes, not able to support, sent him a challenge the next morning; but the —— refused to accept it, saying he knew better things than to fight on the score of so worthless a girl, who, he doubted not, but was by this time a common prostitute. This affair made a great deal of noise in town, and it was not without the interposition of all the friends on both sides, that it was made up, by the —— consenting to ask pardon, and declaring he knew no ill of the young lady, but had spoke only without a thought. The faithful lover, however, was so uneasy at this slur on the reputation of a woman he sincerely believed innocent, that he came to her father, and offered to do his utmost in assisting the search he was then making after her; still declaring, that if she could be found, and would accept his hand, he would ask no other fortune with her, than the happiness of possessing her. This generosity so much charmed the old gentleman, that he wished to retrieve her for nothing so much as to have the power
of

of bestowing her on a person so extremely deserving. This it was that had made him now express himself in the terms he did, on hearing the account my uncle gave of her.

In fine, the lover was sent for the next day, to be made partaker of the joyful news; and, after some consultation, it was thought best he should come down with my uncle, and make his addresses in person to the young lady; that her father was not to appear in affair; but that if she consented, the marriage should be solemnized here. My uncle is to act as her guardian, and have the management of every thing. This seemed, in all their opinions, the most effectual way of silencing the tongue of censure, on her departing from home in that clandestine manner; since it would be supposed she went away for no other reason, than to have the freedom of her choice, in marrying the man she loved.

Now, dear Arabella, you have the whole of this mysterious matter, but you would have pitied the poor creature, if you had seen the agitation she was in on hearing my uncle's coach was coming up the lane that leads to the house. She ran to the window, endeavouring to discover, while at a distance, who was with him; but a tall row of thick-set elms, with their intermingling branches, deprived her of the power; and not till they alighted, and were just entering, could she persuade herself it was any other than her father. It is possible, however, that on sight of this stranger, who is an extreme handsome well-made man, she might guess part of the truth; for as she has since confessed to me, he had given her some reasons to imagine he loved her, though he had never any opportunity of declaring his passion to herself.

My uncle made no mention of any thing that had passed, and matters of meer indifference filled up the
con-

conversation all supper-time, till the hour arrived for repose; he saw his guest into a chamber prepared for him, and then returned to give us an account you may believe we were impatient enough to hear. The young lady could not be told the conditions of her pardon depended on her accepting this gentleman for a husband, without blushing excessively; the proofs he had given, however, of his love and generosity had all the weight they ought to have with her; and I do not doubt but that a very few days courtship will entirely subdue all the scruples her excess of modesty raises, in opposition to the wishes of so ardent and faithful a lover.

When the wedding is over, we shall all go to town together; the bride and bridegroom are to wait on the old gentleman in form, and ask pardon for having married without his privity; after which, the feasting, ball, and every thing proper for celebrating the nuptials of people of their distinction, are already contrived; and you will have the pleasure of seeing the Lady of the Cave shine out with all the advantages of pomp and grandeur: it will also, I flatter myself, add to your satisfaction, that this happy catastrophe is greatly owing to my courage, in pursuing and discovering the White Devil of Broxbon wood; if it would have so good an effect on you, as to rid you of the fears you are in of ghosts and apparitions, I shall have a double cause of rejoicing, being

Dear Arabella,

sincerely yours,

CARICLEA.

T H E

THE HISTORY OF COLLIN.

COLLIN was the only child of a substantial farmer. When he was about fifteen his father died; at whose death he inherited a little land, and under the care and tuition of a fond mother, continued to labour the farm his father rented. His face was extremely handsome, his person perfectly genteel and well-made, nor did there appear in him any other sign of rusticity than remarkable bashfulness, and an innocent simplicity, which shone in his countenance. The delicacy of his heart was equal to that of his beauty. He was scarcely seventeen when he was captivated by the irresistible charms of a girl in the parish, who was about his own age.

Nature had made it impossible for Collin to sigh in vain; he was the object either of the admiration or love of the whole parish, and his nymph, Peggy by name, returned his passion with all the sincerity, and artless innocence, of simple nature. But mutual love was not sufficient to unite them. Collin's heart was shared by the most tender filial affection for his mother, he was filled with gratitude for the care she had taken of his tender years, and could not think of permitting any one to share the command of his house during her life; he considered that he owed her both love and duty, and that he ought to restrain every passion which was inconsistent with them.

Collin let Peggy into his way of thinking, who, with the submission which true love inspires, thought what he did was wisest, most virtuous, discretest, best.

But

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But our lovers soon found, that the fulfilling of duty was not quite sufficient to constitute their happiness. Collin prevailed on his mother to take Peggy into the house as an assistant: in short, as a servant for usefulness, but in other respects on a footing of equality. In all the service she performed Collin was her companion, if she milked he carried the pail, and in every thing attended her.

When they were at leisure they used to walk together, or to sit under the shade of a spreading oak near the house; where, while she worked, he, like a true pastoral shepherd, played on a pipe of his own making, to his attentive and delighted Peggy; she rewarded him with the smiles, and looks of gentle love.

At all their sports, he decked her with garlands made out of the finest flowers of his garden, which he cultivated with the more care, because they served to adorn and distinguish her. Every fair was ransacked in search of ornaments; and the first fruits of the Spring and Autumn, were so many sacrifices to the envied Peggy.

But love did not entirely engross Collin's mind; general benevolence was so predominant in it; that it often conquered the more particular attachment, and he would forsake the sweet converse of his shepherdess, to assist his neighbours in affairs above their capacities. He taught œconomy to the negligent; prevailed on the idle to become industrious, by adding to the encouragement their labour would afford them. He instructed the ignorant, and put the indigent into a way of relieving their poverty. He taught the parish the means of making the poor less expensive, at the same time that they were more perfectly relieved. He improved husbandry; and introduced

duced a kind of manufacture for the weak, the lame and the aged.

If there were any quarrels in the neighbourhood, Collin was chosen arbitrator ; and had such peculiar good fortune, that he pleased all parties : if a married couple disagreed, or a child offended its parent, he was the peace-maker, and by prevailing on each side to shew some condescension, the concord he restored was always lasting. If any man was distressed in circumstances he applied to Collin, who put him in a way of repairing them by prudence and industry. He taught every one to receive and suffer an injury, which he could not prevent, with patience and resolution, and yet never to do one. Nothing was done in the parish without asking Collin's advice, even their sports were under his direction, and were by him so ordered as to contribute to the strength and agility of those that partook of them, and to promote harmony and mirth, without the least offence to sobriety. He taught them that friends might meet and be good company without committing debaucheries, which frequently make them part enemies.

It would be tedious to enumerate all the benefits the parish received from Collin. He brought them to live together with the same affection and concord, as should govern every private family ; their views became all fixed on the good of the society ; no one thought a thing could be an advantage to himself, that was detrimental to his neighbour. In short, Collin put one in mind of the first acquisition of patriarchal power ; such virtues, such persuasive faculties, such superiority of understanding, first gave rise to an extensive government, and taught even the selfish to obey. But he in youth, acquired the authority, which the first rulers gained only with the assistance of their venerable age, which sometimes im-

poses on the imagination, and obtains its power from prejudice. When wisdom appears without a reverend aspect, and hoary head, it is supported only by its own strength, our opinion is conceived without error, and respect is the gift of the heart, in which the fancy has no share.

But having mentioned his public virtues, I shall now take notice of those less extensive, which however were esteemed his greatest merits, by his Peggy.

A young lady whom, as I have given a pastoral name to the rural heroine of my story, I shall call Corinna, came into that neighbourhood. Her family was good, her fortune considerable, and her person beautiful. Soon after she came into the country she accompanied the gentleman and lady she was visiting to a fair in an adjoining parish. Collin's character was too remarkable not to be frequently mentioned; Corinna had heard him spoken of according to his merits; and here he was pointed out to her while he was attending his lovely nymph, and decking her with all the best products of the fair. As he was as much esteemed by the people of the best fashion in the country, as respected by those of inferior rank, and his conversation equally admired, and sought by all, he conversed with those Corinna accompanied, in which discourse she joined.

The evening ended with a rural ball on a smooth green; Collin and his mistress, from the natural respect he commanded, began it, and by their great excellence in that diversion, made it an entertainment to every one to look at them; among which Corinna was, who went away fully sensible, that love, like death, levels all inequality. Her passion at its first birth was too great to be suppressed. She sought all opportunities of conversing with Collin, and as he seldom spent any time from home and his Peggy, unless

less what necessary business, or the service of his neighbours required, she found no means of seeing him often, but visiting his mother, who being greatly respected for his sake, she could the more properly do it frequently.

She knew Collin's fondness for his shepherdes, but accustomed to the inconstancy practised in higher life, was not without hopes that he might be tempted to change an old passion for a new one.

Corinna could not deny that her rival was a complete beauty, but vanity told her she was not in that respect her inferior, and she was inclined to believe, that the graces learnt in a more polished way of life, must be more attracting, than plain simplicity and artless innocence. Her fortune too would have staggered the constancy of most lovers, but she little apprehended that the man she hoped to win, was as much above mercenary views, as he was above the fickleness of lighter minds, and hearts less confirmed in all virtuous principles. She formed her notions on what she had observed in a rank, where luxury and vanity tread every virtue under foot.

With greater reason she hoped first to win the mother: in every rank, age has its share of avarice. After a pretty long intercourse with her, she hinted, that it was in her son's power to increase the intimacy, and to make her duty, as well as her esteem, his mother's due.

The old woman saw many charms in Corinna's fortune, and represented her passion to her son in the most favourable light. She loved Peggy indeed, but could not help preferring so wealthy an alliance. The Proposal she made him met with no very favourable reception; Collin's soul was above such views. He told his mother that Corinna might bring him wealth, but Peggy alone could give him happiness; that her

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artless nature suited his, whereas Corinna had been educated, where complaisance and deceit triumphed over sincerity.

The provident mother omitted no arguments to inspire him with a love of money ; till at last, convinced that he would not comply with her entreaties, she informed Corinna how unavailing her endeavours had been.

Corinna could not now retreat, in first offering herself she had broken through decorum, and her passion was encreased by opposition. She thought love might inspire her with eloquence more persuasive than the cold entreaties of a mother. Accordingly, adding all that art could invent to improve the charms nature and love had given her, she tried every way to attract and confessed her fondness for him with so much softness and modesty, as might have shaken the constancy of any other man. She contrived frequent interviews, and they were all employed to the same design of winning his affections. His mother assisted her, with representing the advantages which would accrue from such a marriage, in the strongest light, and trying, by her persuasions, to add force to Corinna's charms. But the young shepherd resisted both, nor would he even mention to his Peggy the snares which were laid for him ; willing to save her from painful fears ; which lovers on the slightest occasions, and wherever they may have dependance on the beloved's fidelity. are sure to feel. Besides, he was unwilling to lessen her regard for his mother.

Love is quicksighted ; Peggy had long perceived how closely her lover was besieged, and looked on his silence concerning it as a bad omen. Conscious of her own poverty and Corinna's wealth, she would not, by declaring her fears, awaken, or take advantage of, the love she saw he still retained for her. She could
have

have wished herself so disinterested, as to have willingly relinquished him on an occasion which appeared so much more to his advantage, but as that was beyond her power, she was, at least determined to do nothing that should prevent his advancement. She was so humble as to believe her charms inferior to Corinna's, and thought herself so far from deserving Collin for a husband, that, when her fears were strongest, she lamented her own imperfections, instead of blaming him for inconstancy to one, whom she esteemed not worthy to fix him.

Grief and anxiety impaired Peggy's health : " She
 " let concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on
 " her damask cheek, and with a green and yellow
 " melancholy, she sat like patience on a monument,
 " smiling at grief."

She was seized with a slow fever, a common consequence of vexation, which gradually undermining her constitution, at last reduced her to her bed.

Collin had long been uneasy at her sickness, and often pressed her to take advice upon it, but she knowing the cause to be beyond the power of Æsculapius himself, would not consent ; but when she grew so very ill, her anxious lover would no longer wait for her permission, but sent for a physician, who declared her in grant danger, and that he could no otherwise account for her disorder than from vexation.

Collin's anxiety for her would not suffer him to be a moment absent ; he sat all day by her bed-side, and was scarcely able to take any rest at night.

The only part of Collin's behaviour, which could give Peggy any reason to suspect that his constancy was giving way to his interest, was his being less at home than formerly ; not perceiving this alteration was occasioned by his desire of avoiding Corinna, who would often visit his mother, when she knew he was

at home. His tender and assiduous attendance on Peggy during her sickness, renewed her confidence in his love, and gave ease to her heart ; this went farther towards her recovery than all the doctor's art could suggest, and she mended daily. When she began to recover her strength, Collin ventured to inquire into the melancholy to which her physician had attributed her illness ; and as she was too strict an observer of truth to make use of an evasion, she was obliged to confess her jealousy. Collin was shocked to think that love for him had so nearly deprived him of the object of his affections. He easily convinced her that her fears were vain, and his heart above inconstancy. To prevent her suffering any more uneasiness on the same subject, he informed his mother of the cruel effects which had arisen from the encouragement she had given to Corinna's hopes, and her endeavours to procure her success ; at the same time declaring himself resolved never more to converse with Corinna.

Collin's mother acquainted Corinna with her son's resolution. She, unable to bear living in that neighbourhood without enjoying the pleasure of his conversation, left the place, and with sighs resigned him to the quiet possession of his envied Peggy.

After this proof of Collin's constant affection, his mistress thought herself happier than ever, and recovered with even additional bloom. The tenderness of this couple increased daily, and well pleased as Collin was with the uninterrupted intercourse between them, yet his mother could plainly see that he longed for a still more intimate union, and that his forbearing to marry, was making a great sacrifice to his dutiful regard and affection for her. So extraordinary a command over his own passions, made her wish to recompence him, and she could not help confessing to herself, that the man who had so long preferred the gratification

tification of her interest and pride, to the compleating his happiness, deserved indulgence in his turn. Accordingly, she told them, she would no longer be a restraint on their inclinations, and that she thought she could not do less in recompence for what she had made Peggy suffer, than to insist on their marrying. After which she would remove to a small house adjoining, wherein she should end her days in peace, rejoicing in their happiness, and without intermeddling with their affairs.

Peggy endeavoured to persuade Collin's mother to continue in her house, and the management of it; assuring her, she should find her as submissive an assistant after she became her daughter, as while she was more in the capacity of a servant. But herein she was not seconded by Collin; who thought his wife had a just power over every thing that appertained to him, and would not have married unless he could have invested her with it. However, he had no occasion to declare his sentiments, his mother persisting, in opposition to all Peggy's persuasions, to quit the house. The marriage day was fixed, the bands were published. Collin settled his little estate on his mother, he and his Peggy desiring nothing more than each other, and what their industry could gain them.

All the neighbourhood prepared to celebrate this wedding with feasts and rejoicings. One of the principal gentlemen near the place, desired them to be his guests at dinner on their wedding-day, and invited company for a ball, which the young couple were to begin; for Collin's various virtues, and Peggy's beauty and behaviour, made them be received by every one, as if they had been of equal rank, for which their politeness and modesty well qualified them.

The morning before the day whereon their happiness was to be compleated, Collin was taken ill of a fever, which encreased so fast, that his recovery was soon despaired of; and a few days after that which had been so impatiently longed for, put a period to a life of most essential benefit to the whole neighbourhood, and at once blasted his mother's only joy, and made his Peggy a prey to endless grief.

Collin preserved his senses so perfectly, as to take a most affectionate farewell of both; and though resigned to his fate, and expectating the fatal period with true fortitude, yet he could not bid a last adieu to his afflicted Peggy without mingling tears with hers, though he suppressed, as far as he was able, the expression of his grief, in order to comfort her.

Even at this time, when life appeared to him as a blissful state, and yet what he must so soon resign, his benevolent care for the welfare of others, continued as strong as ever. He sent for such of his neighbours as he had reconciled, or over whose manners his example and advice had influence, and with an eloquence which a true sense of virtue alone can give, superior to any thing the artful rhetorician can utter, he exhorted them to persevere in peace and piety; gave them such good rules of life, and enforced them with so much reason and affection as made his audience join in most sincere lamentations, for the man who could make even the last moments of his life so useful. When he had vented all the dictates of his benevolent heart, he desired to be left with his mother and Peggy. He endeavoured to mitigate their affliction, by shewing the uncertainty of all worldly blessings, the instability of every earthly enjoyment, and the fair hopes of eternal happiness which opened to his mind; till finding his strength decaying fast, he would gladly have prevailed on them to retire, that they might not behold

behold the end of the life they loved ; nor he feel, from their unutterable grief, a pain more bitter than the pangs of death ; but they could not be induced to leave the room. He was supported by his wretched Peggy, as his breath grew short, till death put a final end to it ; he expired in her arms, telling her with his last gasp, as what he was sensible would be her only consolation, that after a few short years were passed, they should meet, never to part again, death seized him before he had entirely uttered the last word ; and seemed at the same time to have cut the thread of Peggy's life. There was such sympathy in their nature, that the breath forsook their bodies at the same instant, and she remained in appearance dead ; nor could she of a long time be brought to herself, to lament that existence her friends had so cruelly endeavoured to preserve.

The whole parish mourned in their outward cloathing, as well as in their hearts, for Collin. Peggy, though very young and beautiful to excess, never wore any thing but black after this fatal period.

But her natural charms, void of ornament or cheerfulness, were sufficient to attract many lovers. Among them was a young gentleman of good fortune in the neighbourhood, extremely amiable in every respect, who, a few years after Collin's death, omitted none of the assiduity and tenderness of love to prevail with her to marry him ; but her heart was as obdurate to him as to the rest ; and she protested, that no one should ever have that title to her affections, which only Collin deserved, or could obtain. When various instances convinced people of the firmness of her resolution, their despair procured her peace. The name of love encreased her melancholy : merits, which seemed to flatter the possessors of them with hopes of prevailing over this uncommon constancy, by leading

her to draw comparisons, only served to renew her grief for her deceased lover, who so far surpassed them all. There was nothing pleasing in any character, that did not make her regret a-new the loss of him, in whom every excellence was united. If she saw bad people, it likewise encreased her affliction, by inclining her to repine at the cruelty of fate that allowed life to such disgraces of human nature, when the world was so soon deprived of one who did honour to it. Her heart was so entirely filled with his image, that it became blended with every thought.

Collin's memory did not only live in Peggy's breast. On the anniversary of his death she was yearly accompanied by all the neighbours to his grave, on which they strewed flowers; and hung garlands of rue, cypress, rosemary, and yew, on his tomb-stone, weeping over it with as lively grief, as if that had been the day of his interment.

If the neighbours have an agreement to ratify, they meet at Collin's grave, to make the engagement more solemn. If any quarrels happen, some of the well-meaning bring the contending parties thither, and by recalling him, and his last words to their remembrance, and, as it were, imploring the influence of his departed spirit, they never fail of effecting a reconciliation.

There is nothing of moment which is not there transacted, even lovers make their vows there, and weep his fate, while they are consulting how to secure the happiness of their own.

Peggy remained with Collin's mother during her life, endeavouring, by the duty and affection of a child, to alleviate the loss she had sustained; and greatly as the old woman loved her son, age so far weakened her passions, that she suffered much less than
her

her comforter, whom she always called her daughter ; and at her death left her all she was worth. The measure of Peggy's sorrows were full before, so that the poor woman's death excited more envy than grief in her ; her first affliction so entirely filled her heart, that she had little room for any other.

Corinna most affectionately lamented the young shepherd, and her jealousy, being buried in his grave, she loved Peggy through a similitude of grief. She again came into the country, and visiting her, made her every offer which she thought might tempt her to share her fortune and house, that they might mingle sorrows. But though Peggy was grateful for her generous behaviour, and loved her for the affection she bore to Collin, yet she could not be persuaded to remove to any farther distance from his melancholy remains ; never failing, to the end of her life, to visit his tomb morning and evening, weeping over it with all the distraction of a new affliction ; and when she grew too weak to walk thither without support, she got her neighbours to lead her, never omitting her sacrifice of tears, till death made her eyes cease to flow. She erected a handsome monument over him, with the best part of what his mother left her, and herself wrote the epitaph she inscribed on it ; though the subject was so tender, and the most expressive words fell so short of what he deserved, or she felt, that it was the melancholy employ of almost all the years she survived him, which were so many, as rendered her a melancholy proof that nothing kills so slowly as grief. She was soon worn by it to a beautiful skeleton, her features could not be spoiled, her elegant proportion, and natural gracefulness of person, remained to the last ; but her complexion entirely lost all freshness of colour, grief and dejection were im-
printed

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printed on her countenance, and every feature was impressed with the deepest sorrow ; nor did her heart ever enjoy one chearful moment.



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SHELLEY.

Dear Loretta,

NOTHING but the following extraordinary affair should have hindered me so long, from writing to my valuable friend : You must remember how charmed you was with lady Shelly, in a visit we paid her together ; therefore as you never knew her maiden name, I will only tell you she lost her mother very young, and was at fourteen the most accomplished young person this city could ever boast, and as no expence had been spared in her education, the rising beauties of her mind, shone full as resplendant as her person. The station she then lived in, was in every respect inferior to that she now fills, with so much worth, and dignity. Her engaging attractions soon occasioned continual persecutions to her farther to bestow her in marriage, which how much soever she was averse to, on the account of her youth, she found herself obliged to obey the commands of her father, to receive the odious addresses of the old lord——It was in vain she remonstrated, in vain she represented the misery such a disproportioned union must occasion ; especially as she found in her heart the greatest aversion to the person proposed ;

a title she assured him had no charms for her, nor could she possibly think of sacrificing herself in such a manner, for all the riches of the Indies. Her father, far from being satisfied with those scruples insisted she had bestowed her affections elsewhere; to this she absolutely affirmed she had not yet seen the man, with whom she could wish to spend her life. But fate had already determined she should not with the same sincerity, repeat this again.

As she was allowed every reasonable amusement, her father did not deny her attending some of her young acquaintance to a ball, which was to be on the night following; the pleasure she expected that night, her elegant dress, aided by her natural charms, gained her universal admiration, but none was so lavish in her praise as a young gentleman lately returned from his travels, the second son of lord Shelly: lucky for her she was not engaged in a partner, when he offered his hand, they danced the night away together, and often did he find an opportunity to inform her of his passion and how lovely she appeared; than begged to be admitted among the number of her adorers; at parting he slipped a paper into her hand, requesting from her own mouth, that she was averse to the grand alliance proposed to her, if so, that she would permit him to wait on her father for leave to gain her affections, which he would endeavour to do by the greatest assiduity.

It was in vain she attempted to relax her wearied spirits with sleep, it flew from her, nor could she notwithstanding her fatigue, once compose herself; the agreeable idea of the person she had danced with, continually appeared before her; which greatly aggravated the hated match so much desired by her father. Upon recollection she remembered he was very familiar with one of her companions; to her she resolved

solved to go the next day, and learn if possible the history of her new enamorata. With these reflections, breakfast was no sooner over than she obtained leave to pay a morning visit to one of the ladies who accompanied her the preceding night. She no sooner entered the apartment of her friend than she wished her joy of the conquest she had obtained. I do not know how much that conquest may be worth preserving replied lady Shelly, but as we are on the subject, I should be glad to be a little informed of him and his family. Her friend readily undertook to satisfy her curiosity and proceeded in the following terms.

Mr. Shelly is the youngest son of the old lord, and I assure you there is only a sickly brother in the way, to the title, and an estate of three thousand *per annum*. As to his natural disposition, there is not I believe, one so perfectly agreeable and accomplished as him; he has travelled over the greatest part of the globe, and notwithstanding the many charming women he has conversed with, he still preserved his heart with his liberty; but this, he told me in confidence; that since the opportunity he had of being in your company last night, he no longer desired to maintain the fortitude he had possessed himself with to the age of twenty-four. This delightful relation had the desired effect, she who till now, knew love only by name; quickly felt the subtle poison, spread with incredible swiftness through her whole frame, she presently ended her visit more fixt if possible, than ever, to hazard every thing a father could inflict, rather than be the wife of lord—

This was the first disturbance her tranquil mind was ever truly sensible of, in vain she strove to compose it to its usual state, or calm the perturbations of her heart; then the manner of her lover's addressing himself to her father, and the consequence, all helped to
disquiet

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disquiet her the more ; sleep, however, that sovereign balm to all our woes ; quickly absorbed all her senses, to which she gladly resigned herself a willing victim. Before she left her chamber the next morning, she was told Miss Friendly desired admittance, which was readily granted. She expressed her surprise at so early a visit, but the other presenting her a letter soon cleared up the mystery ; perplexed to the last degree, how to behave on the occasion, she told her friend she did not think it consistent with virtue and reason ; to encourage a private correspondence, however she thought she might gratify her curiosity for once without derogating from her filial duty. Accordingly she opened the letter which contained a sincere declaration of his love, and earnest desire, to be a means of future happiness to her and himself by a union which must complete his felicity ; in return, he only begged she would satisfy him if his addresses would be acceptable to her, which if answered to his satisfaction, he should immediately wait on her father, and concluded, he hoped his fortune and character, would, be acceptable, desiring nothing so much as to free her from the disagreeable engagement she lay under, from her father's commands. Her answer to this was short, but to this purpose ; that was she inclined to alter her station, and all parties were agreeable, she could prefer him to all the men she knew ; at the same time assuring him she would suffer death sooner than become lady——

This agreeable news the young lady promised to convey to the expecting lover who then waited at her house ; and here it will not be improper to give you the character of Miss Friendly.

Her father losing his wife in childbed of her, gave himself up to the company of a set of fox-hunters, nor troubled himself any more about her, than just to
see

see she was not ill-used, and when the nurse thought she was fit, he sent her to a very good boarding school. While she was there the disagreeable news arrived of his death, occasioned by a fall from his horse, as he was leaping a five-barred gate. She being very young would have stood a bad chance, if it had not been for the care of her old nurse, who now served in the capacity of house-keeper, seeing the servants all ready to catch what they could get, she very prudently sent for the parson of the parish, and desired he would put his seal on every room till miss should arrive, and then to be present at the breaking of them. She was then only one year younger than at present, endowed with as much good sense as could possibly be expected, from a young person, that had seen so little of life; I remember you saw her once with me, and took notice of her person, which is very agreeable; when she came to examine into particulars, her mother's jewels and clothes, were safe, and in a little box, she found a will, where her father left her all in the house, and an estate of one hundred *per annum*, with about fifteen hundred pounds in cash.

This was no bad setting out, she therefore by the advice of the clergyman before-mentioned, dismissed all the old servants, that were then about her, (nurse excepted). Her good nature, and easy fortune, gained her genteel acquaintance, nor do I find there can be any thing alledged to her prejudice, but the carrying on this love intrigue, which has turned out happily at last. Mr. Shelly no sooner read the declaration in his favour, than he immediately set forward to the father, who he found at home, after the compliments proper on the occasion, he by gentle degrees, disclosed his business, which the old gentleman received with all the politeness requisite, but at the same time, assured him he had disposed of his daughter;

daughter; and hoped he had given her too good an education aided by her good sense, to dispute his will. This rebuff he bore as well as could be expected; being previously informed of his mistress's resolutions, he took his leave in a very genteel manner, and the old gentleman went in quest of his daughter, to whom he imparted the whole affair, she tacitly heard his commands to think no more of him, but receive lord—as her future husband. Now was her prudence and virtue at the test, unwilling to disobey a father who had so indulgently brought her up, yet more to make herself wretched all her days, she determined to seek her friend where she met with her lover, and then it was agreed they should be privately married at the house of miss Friendly, and then wait for an opportunity either to disclose their marriage, or abscond. During these transactions lady Shelly observed she had never heard him speak of his father, who was as noble in his mind, and behaviour, as by birth and fortune, she determined therefore at their next meeting to enquire if he had informed him with the step he was going to take, rightly judging, without the countenance of one of their parents, she might put it too much in a man's power to use her as he pleased. Mr. Shelly very affectionately assured her, his father was no stranger to the unalterable love he bore her, nor to her character and the rest of her family, and in his answer, which I received this day, he expressed the highest satisfaction, that I can be a means to prevent so deserving a lady, from the miserable union her father, (too worldly minded) has intended for her, still adding, his father preferred the happiness of his children to all the vain acquisitions that riches or honour could bestow: he has likewise insisted on my bringing you immediately on our elopement, to his
 feat,

feat, that he may endeavour by his tenderness to make up the loss of your father's.

Nothing now remained but to fix on the day that was to unite them for ever, and it was agreed she should appear at home as usual, only permitting him to be a partner in her chamber of a night, which could be easily affected, by means of a private stair-case, that led to her room, which was remote from her father's; a favourite servant who attended on her, was to let him in through the garden; this important affair being settled, the next morning was determined for their wedding, and thus they parted.

Her apparent obedience to her father's commands, rendered all to pass quietly at home, nor was he in any great hurry for the wedding, wisely thinking her noble lover's assiduity might in time bring her inclinations to coincide with his will. She passed the night with more tranquillity than she expected, yet could not well reconcile her ingratitude to a father, who in every action of his life (this only excepted) had been very indulgent. The morning however soon dispersed all these gloomy thoughts, and she obtained leave as usual, to pass the day with her friend, who was not once suspected: there she met her lover smiling with a bridegroom's joy, and soon after breakfast the priest performed the sacred ceremony; the remainder of the day past in joy and pleasure, and about the time she thought her father was retired, she and her husband waited at the garden gate, where the faithful Maria presently ushered them to their apartment.

As I am not writing a volume I shall pass over the repeated requests of her father to put an end to the long courtship of lord ——— It is sufficient to say, he began to be very urgent just when she found her shape greatly increasing, she pretended an indisposition, and begged leave to go with miss Friendly to her

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her country-seat, and that on her return his desire should be complied with: This dissimulation had the desired effect; she obtained her father's consent, and she with Maria packed up what was thought necessary for her journey, which she prudently took care should be all her stock. Miss Friendly's coach appearing, prevented the parting from being too mournful, however tears were shed on both sides. They dined at the friend's house, and then after thanking her in very sincere terms for the protection and encouragement she had bestowed on them, Mr. Shelly made her a very genteel present and set off for his father's seat, where they were received with unaffected tenderness and respect, which greatly alleviated the anxiety she felt at this act of disobedience and absence from her father.

She was no sooner settled, than she wrote in the most submissive terms to her father, begged his forgiveness for this first mark of her undutifulness, adding if she had consented to wed lord ——— her life must have been miserable; as on the contrary she had now the fairest prospect of uninterrupted happiness: then acquainted him how long she had been married, and expected to have a young partaker in her joy, very soon. Before an answer could arrive, she presented to her delighted husband a daughter, which promised by its apparent strength, a long life. Soon after this she received a letter from her father, wherein, he so far forgave her as to desire her absence; and that if she should hear he had chose a house-keeper in her room, on whom he should bestow that fondness and fortune she had forfeited, not to be surprised, for he had yet youth enough left, to spend it with an agreeable companion, this occasioned a laugh, and no more was thought about it. By her father-in-law's advice she at six months placed her little darling; with a nurse of great credit, in the neighbourhood,

hood, and very little after this she had a most severe fit of illness, and was persuaded to go to the south of France for the recovery of her health. One unexpected accident or other, kept them there several years, in the mean time her indulgent father-in-law had an apoplectic fit, and word was sent to them of it, desiring their immediate presence.

They hastened their departure, but an unaccountable heaviness hung on Mrs. Shelly, which she could neither account for nor shake off. On their arrival at her father's, the solemn appearance of the servants, still added to her anxiety, and no sooner did she enter her father's chamber, than she fell into a swoon, from which she was with difficulty recovered, when she came to herself she enquired for her daughter, who she supposed was now at home, being in her tenth year, but she received information she was at a boarding school a few miles off, this satisfied her, and she retired to her chamber. The old gentleman then took an opportunity to inform his son, that by the strangest accident in the world, his little daughter had wandered away from her nurse's about six years ago, and notwithstanding the most diligent enquiry she has never been heard of since, the nurse went out of her senses, and continued he, is now confined in a mad house; he then persuaded him to be very cautious in the recital to his wife, as he feared it would prove of the greatest consequence.

The distraction of Mr. Shelly is better imagined than described, some minutes he raved, and was almost in nurse's condition, however recollecting himself as well as he was able, he put all his trust in that providence, who orders all things for the best; he still hoped he might one day or other meet again with his dear Emilia. His father's sudden illness gave him an opportunity to address her in the following

lowing manner. " You see my dear the ways of providence are dark and intricate, this, however we may console ourselves with, that whatever is, is right: my father's sudden disorder, every one must have expected to have terminated in his death; yet you see he is in perfect health, nor knew of our being sent for; we should be careful not to aggravate misfortunes by repining, but endeavour to shew a perfect obedience to the will of providence, we have but one child; and yet by a thousand ways we may be deprived of her, suppose we should hear she was in imminent danger from a fit of sickness, or even that death itself had snatched her away, is it not God's work? and we must resign ourselves. He was going on in this preparatory manner, when lady Shelly interrupted him by saying her mind had long foretold what she was sure had happened, and begged him to ease her anguish by telling what she dreaded to know, that her child was dead. Mr. Shelly now thought to disclose the whole affair, but catching her last words, he thought, it would be better to let her think she was dead, as there was very little hopes of recovering her: he therefore told her that in spite of the skill of the most eminent physicians, a fever had carried her off above a twelvemonth ago. Grief for a time absorbed all her faculties, but her natural good sense, joined with repeated good advice from her husband, and father, restored her in appearance to her accustomed tranquillity: but the image of her child, and the disappointment of not beholding its rising beauties, and cherishing its infant years, with the fond caresses of an indulgent mother, operated so strong on her frame, that she relapsed into her late weak distemper, but by the advice of her physicians, she removed to Bath, and quickly found its good effects.

They

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They had not been there above three months, when Mr. Shelly received a letter from his father, with the news of his brother's death, and saluted him with the title of lord. As he and his brother had never been on good terms, he did not grieve immoderately for his death, but made preparation for his journey to take possession of the estate, worth about three thousand *per annum*. Lady Shelly now thought she might venture to write again to her father, in hopes the addition of a title would pacify and obliterate his resentment, nor was she deceived, as the answer was wrote in much milder terms than the former; however he gave her a hint that it was not the case, nor the deserts, of every disobedient daughter to meet with such good fortune, and concluded with telling her he would receive her as usual, but if she came on the last Thursday of the next month she might be an assistant at his wedding, which would absolutely be on that very day. They both looked on it as a joke of the old gentleman's, but upon a closer enquiry they found it absolutely fact, this determined lady Shelly to visit her father directly to prevent if possible so disagreeable a match as the young lady was but sixteen, and he near sixty, lord Shelly now consulted with his father, whether it would not be better to tell her the truth of the fate of her child, for fear any of her family, should have heard it, and condole with her on the occasion; it was accordingly agreed that she should be informed of it the next morning. She received it with uncommon fortitude and composure, and smiling told him, a sudden gleam of hope prepossessed her, that she should one time or other find her.

People in such high life want very little preparation for any journey, and though it was upwards of an hundred miles from her father's, she found herself at
Wood

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Wood Park, on the fourth day after her determination. She and her lord were received with truly parental affection, and all proper compliments being past, she ventured to ask him concerning his wedding, which he assured her drew nigh, and then expatiated on the charms and accomplishments of his intended bride, and that it was as much her choice as his desire, I expect her and her friend to dinner continued he, and you shall then judge, if she is not a lovely partner for an old man. Whether it was curiosity or any thing else, she could never determine, but the minutes she thought appeared as hours, nor did she ever in her life suffer so much from impatience, as on this day.

The bell from the court yard gave notice of their approach, and soon after, her father led in the most lovely creature she had ever seen in her life: instead of paying her proper compliments, an universal tremor shook her whole frame, and but, for the speedy assistance of her lord, and the hartshorn, she must have fell to the ground; however, in a little time, she recovered sufficiently to do the honours of the table; where every one regaled as they liked, but her meal was on the features of the young lady. Dinner was no sooner over, than the ladies withdrew. Miss Chance, which was the name the intended bride went by, was particularly assiduous about the person of lady Shelly, which was returned by the other with more than common pleasure and satisfaction. Their chat was general for a long time; but lady Shelly observing an uncommon understanding in miss Chance, for a person of her age, directed the greatest part of her conversation to her, and among other subjects, asked, if her parents were alive; to this she replied, she never knew her father, and that her mother had been dead about a year; that she left her a small fortune; and had no relation in the world but
an

an uncle, who was very old, and lived about a mile from thence ; but he having a large family, could not make room for me there, I therefore lodge and board with one miss Friendly, who, she tells me, was an old companion of your's, and designs to drink tea here this afternoon.

Lady Shelly was surprised to hear miss Friendly was in favour again with her father, who on hearing she carried on the correspondence between lord Shelly and me, declared he never would forgive her, and ordered his doors to be shut against her. And he would have kept to his resolution replied miss, if it had not been for me ; but one day, he wrote to her, telling her, if she could persuade me to receive him as a lover, she might command his best services. I see you smile madam, but when I recollected my fortune was but small to support me in a way but one degree beyond decency ; I consulted my uncle, who thought it the prudentest step I could take ; and having no other relations, I thought in case of his death I should be left friendless ; I therefore agreed to receive him as my future husband. Lady Shelly then asked her, if her heart consented to her determination, she blushed, and said she had never been happy enough to engage any body's attention before, nor should she think the union at all proper, if she did not stand in need of settling herself ; though, continued she, I have a reverence for him, which I think surpasses common regard or matrimonial affection. She then asked lady Shelly, if any thing from her first entering the room, had occasioned her sudden disorder, and the attention she regarded her with ever since. Lady Shelly with tears, then told her, she so exactly resembled a daughter she had lost some years ago, that it revived the pleasing image ; and affected her as she had observed. The bell for tea summoned this agreeable company

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company to attend the gentlemen; miss Friendly now made her appearance to the great joy of lord and lady Shelly, they received her with the sincerest friendship, and again thanked her for the hand she had in their happy union: miss Friendly smilingly replied, she believed she was born a match-maker; for I had nobody to thank but her, for a mother-in-law; ah! replied an old gentleman who sat in the corner, (and whom miss Chance had said before was her uncle) many surprising changes happen in life; who would have thought when I took up my dear niece, (as I call her) fast asleep, in Harrum forest at ten o'clock at night, and wrapt her in my great coat, till I got to my poor mistress Worthy's, who is dead and gone; but a better woman never lived, and I was determined if she would not keep the poor thing, (who had certainly strolled away from her mammy's house) I would have carried her to my dame.

At the beginning of his speech all their eyes were fixed on him, but now another object commanded their attention, which was no other than lady Shelly; who had fainted on the bosom of her husband, that wanted supporting almost as much as herself. The old gentleman far from guessing the cause, said, perhaps the lady was breeding, and would have proceeded; but lady Shelly coming a little to herself, eagerly asked for her child, but no one understanding her, as she spoke very inarticulately, she had time to recover herself sufficiently, to clasp the lovely miss Chance in her arms, and but for a plentiful shower of tears, would have again relapsed into her former state of second death. All now was in confusion, the raptures of lady Shelly was like madness, she alternately embraced her child, and then her husband; his manly joy was near akin; thus for a considerable time, nothing was heard but father, mother, grandpapa,

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and lovely child. The old gentleman now saw something was the matter in earnest, and therefore took the only way to procure peace, by saying, if they were unacquainted with the history of his niece; he would tell it them: this answered his purpose, for in a minute all was still, and he began in the following round about manner.

I had been steward to Mrs. Worthy of Leicester, about fifteen years, and lost my master in the first, however, as he left her a great fortune, her equipage, and all her servants were continued. It was about nine years ago, I went to buy hay and straw, for the horses at Harrum; and having two or three friends about a mile out of the town, I left the hostler, in care of the waggon and went my way: but in my return through the forest, I saw something shine, (though it was but a darkish night) and coming up closer to it, I stooped to pick it up; but how was I surprized, when I found I laid hold on an arm, to which this was fastened: here lady Shelly, interrupted him, by asking if he had it about him, yes, that I have, replied he, for my Mrs. Worthy gave it me on her death-bed, and charged me never to part with it: for said she, by this, poor Chance, may one day or other, find her parents, and I am sure they are worth seeking; as all her cloaths bespoke her something above the vulgar. He then presented the locket, which fastened a charm for many infants afflictions; and what she remembered to have put on her neck the day she went to nurse: this occasioned a second scene of joy not inferior to the first; with this difference, that lord Shelly not being fully convinced before, now gave way to his fatherly tenderness, and pressed with becoming affection, his darling child. However, these tumults of joy were subsided, for the sake of the remaining part of the history: which was continued as follows:

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I had well nigh waked the child by my rough handling, but I suppose, she had walked, and cried, till she was heartily tired. I therefore finding she slept on, looked about to see if any body was at hand that might belong to her; but finding nobody, I wraped her in my great coat, and made the best of my way to the inn. I then desired my landlady to get her some victuals, and pretended it was my niece I had fetched from nurse; and to delude her the more, I took off the locket, not considering her cloaths were much better than could belong to a niece of mine; however, I knew nothing of her, nor she of me: and at three o'clock we sat off on our journey, having upwards of thirty miles to go. I bought some cakes, and a fowl of my landlady ready dressed; which I thought would be as much as she could eat till we got home: but when day-light appeared, she looked so pretty, and said ta, and mama, which I found was all she could say: that I had half a mind not to carry her to my mistress at all: but then I thought, the better you love a thing, the more you should do for it: I therefore determined if Mrs. Worthy would not keep her, I would. But no sooner did I tell the story to her, then she declared, she would never part with her, till she was owned by her parents, or death should take her from her. Accordingly she brought her up, just for all the world as if she had been her own child, and when she was big enough, she sent her to the boarding-school: and I have heard her say, she was as good a girl in her learning as any there.

She was almost fourteen when my mistress sent for her home, for she said Chance would direct her, and she never till this minute knew but she was her mother; and she wanted to settle a few things between her and me, before her death; which she found was not far off. Accordingly when miss came home, she

told her, she had left her the interest of two thousand pounds, which was to be paid her by me, whom she styled her uncle; but in case of my death, the person I nominated in my will was to be her guardian. My mistress gave her all her plate and clothes, and after a moral lesson for her future life, she desired I would be a father to her, and preserve her blooming innocence, from becoming a prey to lawless man: she then told me she had rewarded me for my past service, that the furniture of the house was mine, and an estate of seventy pounds *per annum*, with twenty pounds for mourning: she lived but two days after, but I shall regret her all my life.

I was now at a loss how to fix my dear niece, but recollecting a little house on the estate my mistress left me, was inhabited by a single lady; I ventured to ask her if she would take a boarder, and an agreeable companion, she consented to it directly and there I placed my dear Chance. Thus ended the old gentleman's story.

But variously agitated were the minds of the company. The young lady first threw herself at the feet of her parents, then at her grandfire, her destined husband. While he perplexed to the utmost, raised her with tears of paternal affection, nor could for a long time utter any thing but "thy ways O providence are unsearchable:" at length recovering himself, take he cried thy too lovely daughter; thy elopement was nothing, to what I just now felt, but it is over; and I am again myself; he then tenderly embraced his grand-daughter, and restored her to her longing parents; who alternately embraced her, and the old uncle, with tears of joy and gratitude. The scene had been too tender, and their emotions too violent to keep them any longer from rest, they therefore mutually agreed to separate for the night.

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Nothing now remained but the acquainting the old lord Shelly of this miraculous discovery; but that they determined to execute in person. The next morning appeared with additional freshness and beauty, as it enabled the enraptured parents to behold, and clasp again, their long lost child; something yet remained to be done, in token of their joy to the old steward; but as he was sufficiently blessed with the goods of fortune, they were at a loss how to testify their gratitude; they at length agreed to present him with the young ladies picture and their own, with a very fine chariot, and pair of horses: this as the steward was old, was a most acceptable present. Miss Friendly was next to be rewarded for her genteel behaviour to her, and her kindly endeavour, to settle her genteely for life: but they were quite at a loss how to behave in that affair; therefore determined to apply to herself, for her choice; which to their great astonishment, was Mr. Worldley, lady Shelly's father. They asked her, if she was in earnest? to which she replied, she was very well convinced, (his grand daughter excepted,) that he preferred her to all the ladies of his neighbourhood.

The old gentleman than appeared, and declared it was his resolution to have a young wife, and if they had no objection, miss Friendly was the person. All parties seemed very well pleased, particularly as there was not so great a disproportion in their years; (miss Friendly being upwards of thirty;) accordingly they staid till hymen's torch lighted this happy couple to their chamber, and then set off with their prize, for the seat of lord Shelly.

His lordship not expecting them, was in his chamber, when news was brought of their arrival; as curiosity in general leads men to be inquisitive, he asked his servant, if they had brought any body with them;

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only a young lady, replied the man, but the prettiest creature I ever saw. The old gentleman then prepared himself for their reception in the withdrawing room, where they presently attended him; but the moment he fixed his eyes on the young lady, he recollected her features, and was near falling back in his chair, had not his son, ever active, ran to support him; his surprise being a little over, he called miss Shelly to him, and affectionately embraced her by the title of Lovely lost child, how and by what means art thou recovered? They then related the circumstances as before, which he received with the greatest astonishment.

Nurse was then enquired after, and they found she had intervals of reason, at which time she was continually asking for her child; and was once sensible enough to say, the gypsies had taken her into the forest. Lady Shelly often visited her, and took an opportunity on every interval of reason, to tell her she believed she knew where the child was. This, with the assistance of the most skilful physicians, brought her by degrees to tolerable tranquillity, and as her mind gathered strength, they ventured to disclose more and more, of this affair, till she was at last truly sensible of the life of her little charge, and soon after of her being restored to her family.

Her health being perfectly established, lord Shelly fixed her in a very pretty little house, near their own seat, and settled an hundred a year on her for her life. Thus happiness is restored to this worthy family; for a considerable time the noise of the bells, and every other demonstration of joy, prevented all business, but now we are all settled as usual, which gave me the opportunity of transcribing this long history, not a week ago received from lady Shelly; if

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if it answers my design, you will be entertained,
which will be sufficient for

Your truly

affectionate friend,

Harrum Lodge,

Oct. 22, 1762.

CONSTANCE.



THE HISTORY OF LAVINIA.

IN the southern parts of Lancashire Eumenes had a country seat: it was furnished with all the necessities and conveniences of rural simplicity. His thoughts were employed in the contemplation of nature, — he never disturbed himself with courts, parties, or politics. He was possessed of two thousand a year, and had no ambition of being either knight of the shire or custos rotulorum for the county. Eumenes was, in a word, a philosopher; and, considering that he had never the curiosity once to visit the capital, not an unpolite philosopher. Nothing gave him more satisfaction, than to view the plants which he reared with his own hand, in his own garden, except a blooming flower which also owed its existence and excellence to him, — this was Lavinia, an only daughter, his only child.

Her mother died when she was in her most tender years; Eumenes took upon himself the care of her education, which was far beyond what a country

boarding-school could bestow; but her leisure time was taken up in conversing with her father, who in an easy familiar manner gave her such an insight into history, such a taste for poetry, and other branches of literature suitable to her rank, that she soon excelled all her school companions, whose utmost ambition was to dance a minuet, or play a tune upon the harpsichord: even these accomplishments she was not deficient in, but she was justly taught to consider them only as subordinate qualifications.

So promising a pupil, in her tender age, might reasonably be expected to shine forth an ornament to her sex in her full maturity. Lavinia was now sixteen, already above the middle size. Her face a regular oval, her skin more than commonly fair, her eyes black, sparkling and expressive, her nose somewhat prominent, but many lines short of a King William's; her mouth small, her lips thin, her teeth regular and white. Such a face was placed upon a neck remarkably taper and graceful, and ornamented by the careless flowings of her auburn tresses. Her shoulders had that easy fall, which painters emphatically call graceful. The rest of her person was in just proportion, and every part seemed particularly emulous to claim attention; nor were they disappointed for each by turns possessed it. By this I would not mean that Lavinia strove to attract admirers, — far was this from her thoughts. — The sweets of her innocence allowed her no such intentions, — it was nature not art that forced admiration from every observer.

Such a picture has, doubtless, raised the reader's curiosity to know what was her lot, — her fortune seemed without the reach of adverse fate, — a fond loving parent, a dutiful and amiable child, — what could disturb their repose? — What more than a

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a hellish fiend could sow dissention between them, and destroy the peace of either? A stepmother.

Love, or miscalled lust, threw Eumenes intirely at the devotion of Tragitta: a very fury in human shape, which alone distinguished the sex to which she was so great a scandal, without one social virtue to adorn her breast. By some strange fatality, he however, discovered charms, that were to all the rest of mankind hidden. He languished for Tragitta, — he at length offered her his hand, — she scornfully accepted of it.

No sooner had she gained dominion in his family, than she put every thing under a new regulation: some of his oldest servants were dismissed for no other reason than because they were only affectionate to their master: his house was no longer the asylum of hospitality, she was convinced there was no such thing as friendship, and she detested parasites: musty books, made girls flatterers, and gave them romantic notions, — and Lavinia's little library was partly shut up, and partly destroyed. She understood that a garden should be useful, and produce only roots and fruits fit to eat; she therefore resolved that all superfluous expences in raising exotic plants only to please the sight and gratify curiosity, should be retrenched. — Eumenes's botanical garden, which had cost him infinite labour and expence, was destroyed in one day, whilst he was upon a friendly visit to a neighbouring gentleman.

Such female tyranny could not certainly be patiently endured by Eumenes, — he remonstrated, — but she would not listen to him, — he threatened but she out menaced him. Thus yoked, he found no redress but in submission. Authority once yielded is scarce ever recovered. Her despotic power was now extended from his servants, his household,

his garden, to himself and his beloved Lavinia. She accused him of being a sloven, inattentive to dress and appearance, — she said he was a mere rustic, and she would undertake to polish him, for how could he know any thing of the world or politeness, who had all his life been moped up in the country with books, maps and globes? — that she should take him and Lavinia with her to London, that they might know something of the beau monde, and that the girl might no longer be such a flattern and such a hoyden.

Eumenes in vain represented how disagreeable such a journey would be to him — that from his youth he had imbibed a particular aversion to the capital, which he considered as the centre of vice and dissipation, where nothing could be learned that was worth retaining; but where much might be lost that could never be recovered, — innocence and health: that, if she were disposed to go, he had no objection to make; but that he begged she would leave Lavinia and himself to the contemplation of nature and reason.

Nature and reason, were words, the meaning of which she had never yet considered, — to London she was resolved to go, and display her triumph to her acquaintance, — this was her ambition, which nothing could gratify but leading captives in her train.

The coach was accordingly ordered, the baggage prepared, and Lavinia commanded to get ready for the journey: Eumenes finding his daughter upon the point of being separated from him, endeavoured to suppress all his antipathes to such a measure, and at length acquiesced to Tragitta's plan.

We may now suppose them arrived in the capital — hurrying away from one public diversion to another, performing the constant rotation of plays, operas, oratorios, and ridottas. Eumenes through
neces-

necessity attended; and, though novelty, and such a variety of objects as forced themselves to his view compelled him to gaze, reflection soon succeeded, and the folly of pageantry and the ridicule of parade, constantly manifested in this uninterrupted circle of pleasure, made him consider its votaries as the most irrational of human beings.

All eyes were fixed on Lavinia — the superiority of her natural charms, so far eclipsed all the toilette arts, that every flattering admirer buzzed about with inquiries for the fair stranger. “Is it possible, cries one, that so much beauty could till now be sequestered in some distant village unnoticed by the gay and the polite?” “A rustic! — a very rustic! (replies Flippanta) you may see by her looks and gait she has seen nothing of the world,” Coquettilla at a route, struck with jealousy of Lavinia’s attractive charms, questions her, to expose her ignorance, — but Coquettilla retreats, incapable of supporting the conversation, which is overheard by lord C——, who pronounces Lavinia’s mental perfections even superior to those of her person.

The suffrage of so celebrated a judge, made every one solicitous of being of the number of Lavinia’s acquaintance — She was courted by the great, admired by the judicious, and envied only by the fair.

Such a reception highly displeased Tragitta, who intended Lavinia only for her foil, to display to greater advantage her imaginary perfections. She was now more out of temper with London than she had been with the country; and, as a plea for a precipitate retreat, she, with much seeming prudence, acquainted Eumenes that she was afraid an intrigue was carrying on between a young nobleman of a most abandoned character and Lavinia; and, as the consequence must be dreadful, she thought it would be prudent

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prudent to nip this dangerous amour in its bud. Eumenes startled at the information, but reflecting upon Lavinia's virtues, so greatly improved, he could not give credit to the assertion. Tragitta's pride was mortified at his want of credulity, and her wicked imagination was set in play to give a plausibility to what she had advanced. She forged a letter from the young nobleman as if witten to Lavinia, and wrote another to him, as if from her, appointing a rendezvous, "that she might disclose the tender emotions, which she had in vain endeavoured to suppress." When Eumenes read his lordship's supposed letter, his indignation kindled with the familiarity with which he treated Lavinia's virtue: — he rose, and taking his sword, resolved to have revenge of the villainous betrayer.

Here was a triumph for Tragitta—— "Stay," said she, "two hours hence you may see him by your daughter's own appointment in her chamber." What a succession of rage, phrenzy, and natural love, by turns possessed the agitated breast of Eumenes!

Tragitta had in the mean while contrived that Lavinia should be absent upon a visit; and his lordship was, unknown to any but Tragitta and her maid, introduced into Lavinia's chamber. Eumenes being apprised of the time of the nobleman's arrival, had planted himself in a closet; as he had resolved, to make a sacrifice of his daughter, whom he thought had already sacrificed her honour, as soon as he had ocular demonstration of her infamous design. But upon the sight of his lordship in her bedchamber, his rage surpassed all the bounds of reason, and starting from his concealment, he rushed sword in hand upon his lordship. The young nobleman was unprepared for such an attack, but instantly drawing to defend himself, Eumenes received a thrust in the breast,

which made him drop, and the fugitive nobleman, without waiting for his imaginary mistress, made the best of his way to his own dwelling.

So uncommon an adventure was presently circulated, and Lavinia heard the fatal news whilst she was still upon her visit. She flew home with the utmost consternation — but, heavens! what was her anxiety when she found her father's door barred against her.

Innocence in distress hath its own peculiar sympathetic powers; but such injured innocence as this, must make us feel Lavinia's very pangs, and execrate the author of her misery.

The profligate nobleman, whose vanity was gratified by this imaginary conquest, thought the risk he had run of his life, intitled him to some fame in the annals of gallantry; and, as a conviction of his good, though perilous fortune, he publickly exposed Laura's supposed letter. The censorious world too readily swallowed the bait of scandal, and poor Lavinia's reputation was thus barbarously immolated.

Humanity must shudder at her fate. — Disowned by her father, slighted by her former friends and acquaintance — an outcast to the world — whither must Lavinia fly? Must she perish by the hand of famine, or embrace the infamy falsely imputed to her? — Forbid it justice! — Forbid it virtue!

Seven whole months did Lavinia subsist upon the scanty pittance of her daily earnings at her needle: at the end of that period, Tragitta was seized with a violent fever; the faculty gave her over, and her only prospect was the grave. Remorse preyed upon her, and gave additional force to her disorder: her mind as well as body was distracted — her tortures were insupportable; and hoping some alleviation of her torments, she sent for Eumenes and revealed the treacherous diabolical part she had acted towards his daughter;

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daughter. — It would be a vain and fruitless effort to attempt depicting the state of Eumenes's mind at this discovery — Suffice it to say, that messengers were instantly dispatched all over the kingdom to bring him his lost and much injured Lavinia. Her retirement was so great and she lived so concealed, that it was with the utmost difficulty her residence could be traced. She was, however, at length explored, and a letter put into her hands written by her father, conceived in the most tender and affectionate terms, wherein he related the imposition that had been passed upon him, and acknowledged the weakness he had been guilty of in credulously imagining her criminal.

Tragitta breathed her last a few hours after Lavinia's return. A stricter cordiality than ever now subsisted between Eumenes and his amiable daughter.

Reader, if thou knowest a woman who does honour to a coronet, and who resembles all the striking lineaments of this great but real portrait, it is ———
LAVINIA.

THE HISTORY OF LAURETTA.

A

M O R A L T A L E.

THE marquis of Clancy, whose country-seat was not far off from the village of Coulange, came with some company to see the rural diversions, and mix in the dances of the peasants, as those frequently do whom chagrin drives from the bosom of luxury; and who, in spite of themselves, are brought back to a relish for simple and innocent pleasure.

Amongst the country lasses, Lauretta was distinguished by the elegance of her stature, the regularity of her features, and that natural grace which is more taking than beauty. She was the only person taken notice of. The ladies of quality, who piqued themselves on their beauty, declared they never saw any thing so ravishing. They made her come to them, and examined her as a painter does a model. "Look up, my dear," said the ladies to her. "What vivacity; what sweetness; what pleasure in her looks! If she did but know what they express, what mischief would a compleat coquette do with these eyes! What a mouth! what vermillion lips! How fine an enamel her teeth! Her brown complexion is owing to her being exposed to the weather; but it is the colour of health! Only observe her ivory neck; how finely it is turned! How charming she would be in a court dress! To whom has nature been so prodigal of her gifts, and in what a place does beauty endeavour

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to conceal itself! Lauretta, how old are you?" "Fifteen last month, madam." "You are to be married soon, I suppose!" "My father says there is no hurry for that." "But Lauretta, have not you some littel sweetheart in your mind?" "I do not know what a sweetheart is." "Have not you some young lad that you would wish to have for an husband?" "I do not trouble myself about that, it belongs entirely to my father." "What employment does your father follow?" "He farms his own land." "Is he rich?" "No; but he says he is happy if I am but discreet." "And what do you do?" "I help my father; I work with him." "With him! What do you till the ground?" "Yes; but the care the vineyard requires, is an amusement to me. To weed, to plant the props for the vines, to fasten the branches to them, to prune the leaves, to make the grape ripen, and to gather them when ripe, are not very laborous employments." "Poor girl! I do not wonder her pretty hands are so tanned. What a pity she is born in such an obscure station!"

Lauretta, who had always excited envy among her companions, was surprized to find pity. As her father had carefully concealed from her whatever might have given her concern, she never imagined she had any reason to be uneasy; but the dress of these ladies convinced her they were in the right to pity her. What a difference in their cloathes and her's! How elegant and graceful the dressing of their hair! What fresh lustre, fine linen, ribbands and laces, gave to charms half concealed! Indeed they had not the sprightly air of perfect health; but could Lauretta suppose that the luxury which dazzled her was the cause of this paleness which even paint could not disguise? Whilst she was thinking on what had passed, the count of Luzy came up to her, and asked her to dance

dance with him. He was young, genteel, and handsome, and too bewitching for Lauretta.

Though she had not a very delicate taste in dancing, she did not fail to remark, in the movements of the count, an agreeableness which the young peasants wanted. She had before sometimes felt her hand squeezed, but never by so soft an hand. The count, in dancing, followed her with his eyes; Lauretta found his looks gave life and soul to the dance; and, whether she would, through emulation, give the same agreeableness to her own, or whether the first sparks of love communicated itself from her heart to her eyes, they answered those of the count with the most natural expressions of pleasure and sensibility.

The dance being ended, Lauretta sat down at the foot of an elm; and the count placed himself near her. "My dear girl," says he, let us not part from each other; I will dance with nobody but you." "You do me honour," replied Lauretta, "but it will vex my companions, and they are jealous of me." "They must be so, without doubt, to see you so handsome; and it would be the same if you lived in a city: it is a misfortune which will pursue you every where. Ah, Lauretta, if you could but be seen with your natural charms at Paris, amongst the ladies who are vain of beauty, which they owe to artifice!" "Me at Paris! What should I do there?" "Delight all eyes, and enslave every heart. Hear me, Lauretta, we have no opportunity to talk together here; but, in a word, it depends on yourself to exchange your obscure cottage for a palace at Paris glittering with gold and silk; a table served according to your own pleasure; the finest furniture; the most elegant equipage; fine cloaths; and, in short, every thing which renders life agreeable, without any other care than that of pleasure,

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pleasure, and loving me as I love you. Think of this at your leisure; next Sunday there will be a dance, where all the young people of your village are invited: be there yourself, Lauretta, and tell me if my passion affects you, and whether you will accept my offer. I ask of you, at present, an inviolable secrecy alone; keep it carefully; if it escapes you, all the good fortune which awaits you vanishes as a dream." In fact, Lauretta thought she had dreamed. The glittering fortune which had been set before her eyes was so distant from the low condition she was reduced to, that she could not conceive it possible to pass so easily from the one to the other; yet the fine young gentleman who made her these offers had not the appearance of a cheat, he spoke so seriously, and she had observed so much honesty in his looks and speaking. "I should certainly have perceived it," says she, "if he had intended to make game of me; yet why has he recommended secrecy so strongly to me? For making me happy, he wishes I would love him; nothing can be more reasonable; but he consents, no doubt, to my father's partaking his kindness with me; why, then, should I conceal it from my father?" If Lauretta had the least idea of seduction or vice, she would have easily understood why Luzy asked this secrecy; but her prudence was confined entirely to refusing those rough liberties of the country lads; and in the decent and respectful behaviour of the count she perceived nothing which it was her duty to guard against.

Busied with these reflections, and her head filled with the idea of luxury, she returned to her lowly dwelling, where every thing seemed changed. Lauretta, for the first time, was mortified at dwelling in a thatched house. The plain furniture, which necessity had made precious, now seemed contemptible; her

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her household concerns began to disgust her; she found no longer the same flavour in her bread; and, instead of the fresh straw on which she had hitherto slept so soundly, she longed for gilt ceilings and a magnificent bed.

It was still worse the next morning, when she was to return to work, and sustain the heat of the day on the sunny side of an hill. "At Paris," says she, "I should awake free from all care, except loving and the desire of pleasing. The count told me so. What a charming man this count is! He even left the ladies to concern himself about a poor country girl! This does not look like pride, yet he has a great deal to be proud of. He seemed as if I did him a favour in preferring him to the country fellows: he thanked me for it in such tender looks, in so humble and affecting a manner, that, had he spoke to a lady of quality, he could not have been more civil. Luckily I was tolerably dressed; but to-day if he should see me, what cloaths, what a condition am I in!"

Her disgust at her situation continually encreased during three days of fatigue and weariness which she had yet to pass before her next meeting with the count; but, at last, the expected moment came: the village youth were assembled at the neighbouring seat, and the instruments gave the signal for dancing in a saloon formed by lime-trees. Lauretta advanced with her companions, no more with that resolute air which she had at the last holliday, but with a modest and bashful countenance. This Luzy thought a fresh beauty; he saluted her particularly, but without the least mark of acquaintance with her; he even abstained from approaching, and waited offering to dance with her till some other person should first set an example.

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The chevalier de Soligny, who, since the last holliday, had never ceased speaking of Lauretta with a kind of rapture, took her out to dance. Luzy looked upon him as a rival, and watched his eyes with the greatest uneasiness; but Lauretta had no occasion to perceive his jealousy to quiet him. In dancing with Soligny, her behaviour was indifferent, cold, and without meaning. When his own turn came to dance, all her charms brightened up, a blush covered her cheeks, and a secret, almost imperceptible, smile, stole from her rosy lips. Had they been alone, his step would have been, to fall at her feet and return her thanks; but, at present, he could only squeeze the hand of his mistress, and, by his trembling, express his transports.

“Charming Lauretta,” says he, after the dance was over, “I am impatient to know your resolution.” “It is to take no step without the approbation of my father, and to follow his advice in every thing. If you do me any kindness, I would have him partake of it. If I am yours, I would have his consent.” “Take care you do not consult him, I fear him beyond every thing. There are formalities amongst you, which my condition prevents my complying with. Your father would, in endeavouring to subject me to them, require an impossibility; and, on my refusal, would accuse me of endeavouring to deceive you. He is ignorant how much I love you; but, Lauretta, do you think me capable of injuring you?” “Alas! I think you all goodness; you would be an excellent impostor if you were wicked.” “Dare you then trust yourself with me?” “It is not I that distrust you, but I cannot hide myself from my father. If what you propose is proper for me, he will give his consent to it.” “No, he will never consent; you will lose me and be sorry for it; the oppor-

opportunity will be lost, and you will, all your life, be condemned to hard labour; which, no doubt, you are fond of, since you dare not quit it. Ah! Lauretta, were these delicate hands made for labour? Should the weather spoil your charming complexion? Ought you, Lauretta, the charm of nature, possessed of every grace, to waste your life in an obscure and toilsome station? become, perhaps, the drudge of some vile peasant; and pass your old age in indigence, without having tasted any of those pleasures which ought to follow you without ceasing? See what you prefer to the delights of ease and plenty, which I promise you; and on what does your resolution depend? On the fear of causing your father some uneasy moments! It is true your flight will afflict him at first; but afterwards, how pleased will he be to see you rich by my favours, which shall be heaped on him too! What sweet violence will you not be guilty of, in forcing him to quit his cottage, and pass the remainder of his life without work! For then I shall have no longer his refusal to fear: my happiness, yours and his, will be secured for ever."

Lauretta escaped being seduced, at this time, with the greatest difficulty; and, had it not been for the fatal accident which threw her again into the snare, the instinct of innocence alone would have been sufficient to have preserved her from it.

A violent hail storm fell about the village of Coulange, which entirely destroyed the vintage and harvest. The damage was general. During the storm, a thousand piteous cries were heard mixed with the noise of the winds and thunder; but, when the mischief was all over, and the light, more frightful than the preceding darkness, discovered the branches of the vines stripped of their grapes and broke, the corn laid, and the fruit beaten down, a profound silence succeeded.

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succeeded. The roads were filled with a crowd of unhappy wretches in the greatest consternation, who contemplated their ruin, bewailed the loss of their harvest, and saw nothing before them but the prospect of the utmost misery. By the fire sides, the mothers, in tears, pressed their tender infants to their breasts, and cried out, "Who will give you suck if we want bread?"

At sight of this calamity, the first ideas which Luzy conceived were those of sorrow for the misfortune of Lauretta and her father. Impatient to fly to their relief, he concealed his tender interest under the veil of pity for these unfortunate people in general. "Let us go to the village," says he to his company, "and comfort these poor people: it will cost each of us but a trifle to save twenty poor families from the distress and despair this accident has reduced them to: we have partook of their joy, let us partake of their misfortune." These words made an impression on hearts already melted by pity. The marquis of Clancy set the example; he offered his peasants assistance, promised them relief, and inspired them with hope and spirits. While he was surrounded with tears of gratitude, the rest of the company spread themselves over the village, entered the cottages, distributed presents to them, and tasted the sensible and uncommon pleasure of being adored by those they had saved from ruin. In the mean time, Luzy ran about like one distracted to find the dwelling of Lauretta. He found it at last, and saw an old peasant sitting at the door with his head bent between his knees, and his face covered with both his hands, as if he was afraid to see the light again. It was the father of Lauretta. "Friend," says the count to him, "I see you are in the utmost consternation; but do not despair; Heaven is just, and there are compassionate
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tionate hearts amongst mankind." "Alas! sir," answered the old man, "is it fit that a man who has served his country twenty years, who retired from the service covered with wounds, and who has never ceased working hard ever since, should beg? Ought not the earth, which has been bathed with my sweat, to afford me a subsistence? Must I end my days by begging my bread?" So noble a soul, in a man of his obscure station, surprized the count. "You have served then," says he, "I suppose,"— "Yes, sir, I bore arms under Berwick: my father, before a most unfortunate law-suit deprived him of his estate, had sufficient to maintain me in the rank I had obtained; but when I was reduced, he was ruined. We came here to conceal ourselves, and, with the wrecks of our fortune, purchased a small piece of ground, which I farmed myself. Our first condition was unknown, and I was not ashamed of this, to which I seemed born: I maintained and comforted my father: I married, to my misfortune; it is at present I find it so." "Is your father dead?" "Yes." "Your wife?" "She is too happy not to see this dreadful day." "Have you any family?" "I have only one daughter. Poor girl! Do not you hear her sighs? She hides herself from me, that she may not add to my grief." Luzy would have hurried into the chamber where Lauretta was weeping had it not been for fear of discovering his design.

"Take this," says he to the father, offering him his purse: this assistance is but trifling; but when you have occasion, remember the count of Luzy; I live at Paris." Having said this, he left him immediately, without giving him time to return him thanks.

The old man was greatly surprized at finding fifty guineas in the purse — more than three times the rent of his vineyard. "Come here child," says he, "look

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“ look at that person who is gone along, he is certainly an angel ; but what do I fancy ! run Laretta, and let him know he has made a mistake.” Laretta overtakes him, and says, “ Sir, my father cannot think you intended to make him so considerable a present, and has sent me to return it you.” — Ah Laretta, is not all I am worth your’s and your father’s ? Can I pay him too much for being the occasion of your birth ? Carry him back this trifle ; it is only an earnest of my good will ; but do not let him know my motive. Tell him only that I think myself happy in obliging an honest man.” Laretta would have thanked him. “ To morrow,” says he, “ at day-break, passing by the end of your village, I will receive your thanks with your farewell.” “ What, Sir, do you go away to-morrow ?” “ Yes, I shall depart the most amorous and unfortunate of mankind.” — “ At break of day ?” — “ Yes,” “ About that hour, my father and I shall set out to work together. — No, he sets out first, I stay to take care of the family, which will stop me a little.” — “ And do you go my road ?” “ No, I go above the village, but to go a little out of my way is the least I can do for so many marks of your friendship.” — “ Adieu then, Laretta, till to-morrow : to see you, though it be but for a moment, will be the last pleasure of my life.”

Basile, at the return of Laretta, had no doubt of the good intentions of Luzy ; he exclaimed every moment, “ What a good young man ! What an excellent heart ! nevertheless, daughter, do not let us neglect what the hail has left. The less there is, the better we ought to manage it.”

Laretta was so touched with the goodness of the count, and so afflicted to have caused his unhappiness, that she wept the whole night. “ Alas,” says she, “ had

“ had it not been for my father, how happy should I have been to have gone after him.” The next morning she did not put on her holiday cloaths; but did not, nevertheless, fail to mix a little coquetry, natural to her age, in the simplicity of her dress. “ I shall never see him more! what does it then signify whether I am more or less handsome in his eyes?”

Saying these words she adjusted herself, intending to carry him some fruit for his breakfast. “ He will not despise them surely,” says she, “ when I tell him I gathered them myself;” and, placing the fruit on a bed of vine leaves, she bathed them with her tears. Her father was already gone to work, and the dawn of day began to peep; when she, poor girl, with her heart full, arrived alone at the extremity of her village. In a moment after, the post-chaise of Luzy appeared; he perceived her at a distance, and, throwing himself out of his carriage, with a mournful air, said, “ I am sensible Laretta, of the favour you grant me; I have, at least, the consolation of seeing you sensible of my pain, and I believe you are sorry that you have made me miserable.” I am sorry indeed, and I would return all the kindness you have done me and my family, never to have seen you.” — “ And I, Laretta, would give all I possess, never, during life to quit you.” — “ Alas, this seems to me to depend on yourself; my father can refuse you nothing, he loves and reveres you.” “ Fathers are cruel, they would have one marry, and I cannot marry you; let us think no more of it; let us quit each other, take an eternal adieu; we who never, if you had thought proper, should have ceased living for each other, and enjoying together all those gifts which fortune has bestowed on me, and love on you. You cannot conceive the pleasures which

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wait you; if you had the least idea of them; if you knew what you renounce." — "Without knowing, I am sensible of them: since I have seen you, every thing but yourself I despise. At first, my mind was busied about the fine things you promised me; and since that is vanished, I have thought of it no more; I have thought of you alone. Ah, if my father was but willing." — "What occasion have you for his consent? Do you wait his leave to love me? Does not our happiness depend on ourselves? Love and honour are your guarantees. Is any thing more sacred, or more inviolable? Believe me, when the heart is bestowed, every thing is said, the hand follows of course. Give me then your hand, that I may kiss it a thousand times, and bathe it with my tears." "There it is," replied she, crying. "It is mine, this hand so dear is mine; I hold it from love, and will part with it but with my life. Yes Laretta, I die at your feet, if I must be separated from you." Laretta, believed in good earnest, that in losing the sight of her he would cease to live. "Alas," says she, "am I the cause of this misfortune?" — "Yes, cruel girl, you are the cause of it; you desire my death." — "Oh my God, no, I would lose my own to save your's." — "Give me a proof of it," replied Luzy, seeming to make use of some force, "and go with me, if you love me." "No, I cannot, I cannot, without my father's consent." — "It is very well, leave me then, leave me to my despair." At these words, Laretta, pale and trembling, her heart pierced with grief and terror, dared neither keep nor let go the hand of Luzy. Her eyes, full of tears, followed with dread, the wild looks of the count. "Deign," says she, (to calm his passion) "to look at me without anger; I was in hopes to make you accept this token of my acknowledgement;

ledgement; but I dare not offer it you again." —
 "What, fruit for me! Ah cruel! do you insult me? It is poison I request;" and, throwing away the basket with disdain, he went away almost furious.

Lauretta took this behaviour for hatred, and her heart, already too far softened, could not sustain this last attack. Scarce had she strength to retire a few steps, but she fainted away at the foot of a tree. Luzy run and found her, bathed in tears, without colour, and almost lifeless. He was almost beside himself; and at first, thought only of bringing her to her senses; but as soon as she began to recover, he availed himself of her weakness; and when she was entirely recovered, she found herself in the count's post-chaise, far off her village. "Where am I?" says she, opening her eyes — "Ah, Luzy, is it you! are you carrying me back to my father's!" — "My soul," says he, pressing her against his breast, "I have seen the moment when our parting almost cost us both our lives; let us not put to this trial again two hearts too tender to sustain its force.

"I am yours, my Lauretta; it is on thy lips I make an oath, to live for you only." "I ask no better," says she, than to live also for you alone; but my father, must I leave my father? Has he not a right to dispose of me?" — "Your father, my dear Lauretta, shall be loaded with kindnesses; he shall partake the good fortune of his child; we will be both his children; rely on my tenderness to console and reconcile him; come, let me kiss off your tears; let mine fall in thy bosom; they are the tears of joy, the tears of pleasure." The bewitching Luzy mixed in his language all the charms of seduction, and Lauretta was not insensible of it; but the image of her father, uneasy and afflicted, in vain enquiring of every body in the village for his lost daughter,

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and not meeting with her in the evening, returning home almost distracted, presented itself perpetually to her imagination.

Luzy travelled at a great rate; his servants were tried and faithful; and Lauretta left behind her no traces of her flight, Luzy, however, sent one of his servants with this note, wrote in a disguised hand, to the curate of Coulange:

“ Desire the father of Lauretta to make himself
“ easy; she is well; and the lady who has taken
“ her with her, will take the same care of her as if
“ she was her own child. He shall soon know what
“ is become of her.”

This note, which afforded the father not the least consolation, sufficed to remove the uneasiness of Lauretta; love had penetrated into her heart, and opened a passage for pleasure, which dissipated the clouds of grief; stopped her tears; appeased her sorrow; and a profound forgetfulness of every thing but her lover, left her to taste, without alarm, the culpable happiness of being his.

The kind of delirium which seized her on her arrival at Paris, diverted her mind from every other object. Her house was a fairy palace; every thing there had the air of enchantment: her bath, her toilette, and the delicious repose which love left her to taste, were so many varied forms which pleasure took to seduce her through all her senses. At her waking, she thought she had only dreamed: at her rising in the morn, she saw herself surrounded by servants, waiting to assist her, and jealous of pleasing her: she who had never known but to obey, need but only wish to be obeyed. “ You are queen here,” says her lover to her, “ and I am your first slave.”

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Guess, if possible, the surprize and astonishment of a simple country girl, at seeing her fine black hair, till now always negligently tied, and whose curls were formed by nature only, dressed in taste, and mixed with flowers and jewels; at beholding the most elegant silks spread before her, which seemed to rival each other; at seeing her beauty dart out in its radiancy as from a cloud, and loaded with diamonds! nature had been prodigal of her charms to her, but some of these gifts had need of cultivation; the literati run in crowds to dispute the care of instructing her; and Luzy, adoring his conquest, was almost beside himself with joy and love.

In the mean time, old Basil was the most unfortunate of fathers. Proud; jealous of his honour; and, above all, of the reputation of his daughter; he had sought her, expected her, in vain, without making his uneasiness public; and not a person in the village was acquainted with his misfortune. The curate assured him of this himself, by communicating to him the note he had received. Basil gave no credit to it; but dissembling with the curate, said to him, "My daughter is prudent but she is young, simple, and credulous. "What lady would have taken her into her service, and refused her asking my consent! let us make not a public talk of the imprudence of youth, but let people imagine that my daughter has left me with my consent. You only are acquainted with the secret; manage the daughter and father." The curate, who was a prudent, good man, promised to hold his tongue. But Basil, overwhelmed with grief, passed whole days and nights in tears. "What can be become of her?" said he. "It cannot be a lady that she has followed. A woman could not be hard-hearted enough to steal a child from her father and commit a rape. No: it must be some ravisher who

has seduced and ruined her. If I could discover him, either his blood or mine should wash out the injury."

He went to the village from whence the note came; and, by the directions of the curate, he found out the person who delivered the note. He questioned him, but could obtain from him only a vague and confused account. The situation of the place served only to deceive him, being six leagues from, and directly contrary to, the road Luzy had taken: and, even if Bazil had compared the departure of the count with the loss of his daughter, he would never have suspected such a virtuous young gentleman. As he imparted his suspicions to nobody, nobody could clear them up. Mourning by himself, "My God," says he, "it was in anger that you gave her me! and I senseless wretch, to be rejoiced when I saw her beauty encrease with her growth! What was my pride is now become my shame! Why did she not die in her infancy?"

Lauretta persuaded herself her father was easy, and she felt but a slight uneasiness at her having left him. Love, vanity, and a taste for pleasure; the care of cultivating her talents, and a thousand varied amusements, employed her time, and entirely filled her soul. Luzy, who loved her to distraction, and was fearful any person should rob him of her, let her go out in the day time as little as possible; and contrived every method to be invisible in the midst of company. Lauretta was sufficiently happy to please him she loved; she felt not the uneasy desire of being seen and admired, which reigns among the handsome women who frequent the public walks and theatres. Though Luzy, by the choice of a small circle of amiable persons, rendered his evenings agreeable, she busied herself about him alone; and, without disobliging any body else, gave him proof of it. The art of conciliating our choice with complaisance, is the secret

secret of delicate minds. Coquetry studies this; love is acquainted with it, without having learned it.

Six months passed in this union, this sweet intelligence, of two hearts charmed with each other, without weariness without inquietude, without any other jealousy than that of fearing not to please as much as they loved; which occasions a desire of uniting in ourselves every thing which has power to captivate an heart. In this interval, Lauretta's father had twice received news of his daughter, and presents, from the lady who had taken her for a companion, through the curate's hands, sent to the neighbouring post-office by a faithful servant. The pacquets came safe to hand; Basil knew not to whom to send them back, being anonymous, and his refusal would have caused a doubt of what he was desirous should be believed. "Alas!" says the good man to himself, "my daughter is, perhaps, honest still; appearances are against her, but they are appearances only: and were my suspicions just, it is my duty to grieve, but not to dishonour my child." Heaven owed some consolation to the virtues of this worthy father; and it was Heaven, certainly, which occasioned the following accident.

Business obliged Basil to come to Paris; as he traversed this immense city, a stoppage of coaches detained him: the voice of a woman in a fright drew his attention; he saw, but dared not believe his eyes, his daughter Lauretta in a gilt chariot, magnificently dressed, and covered with diamonds. Her father had not known her, if, perceiving him herself, her surprise and terror had not made her endeavour to hide her face. By her endeavour to conceal herself, and her outcry, he had no doubt but it was his daughter. While the carriages were disengaging themselves, he slipped between the wall and his daughter's

chariot, and in a severe tone said "Lauretta, where do you live?" Lauretta, trembling, told him her direction. "And what name do you go by?" replied he. "Coulange; from the place of my birth." "Of your birth, unhappy girl! This evening be alone; I will call on you." Having uttered these words, he pursued his journey. Luzy supped in the country; she found herself alone at the time she most wanted counsel and advice. She was to appear before her father, whom she had betrayed, loaded with grief and shame. Her fault appeared to her now in its most frightful shape. The infatuation of love, and charms of pleasure, had drove away the idea of it; but now the veil was removed, she saw what she was in the eyes of the world and her father. Affrighted at the examination she was to undergo, "Wretch that I am," said she, melted in tears, "Where shall I fly! where shall I hide myself! My father, honesty itself has found me, abandoned to a vicious course of life with a man who is not my husband. O! my father! how shall I appear before you!" She more than once thought to avoid him; but vice had not yet effaced in her mind the laws of nature. Shall I reduce him to despair, and, after having merited his reproaches, draw on myself his curses? No, though unworthy the name of a daughter, I revere that sacred name. Did he come to kill me, I ought to wait for it, and fall at his feet." "But know, a father is always a father, mine will be melted by my tears, my youth, my weakness, the count's love, every circumstance will excuse me." It would have distracted her to have had her servants witnesses of the humiliating scene she was to go through, but luckily she had given them leave to go out that evening; so that when her father came, she was entirely alone. Having looked in her face some time

time pensively, he with emotion asked, what business she had there? Lauretta answered by throwing herself at his feet and bathing them with her tears; "I see" (says her father, looking round him) "in this apartment, "where every thing proclaims luxury and riches, that vice is at its ease in this city; may I know who has enriched you in so short a time?" Lauretta still made no other answer than tears and sobs: "speak," says her father, "you will have leisure for your tears hereafter." At the recital of her story, Basil's astonishment turned to indignation, "Luzy," says he, "this honest man! behold the virtues of the great! did the wretch think by giving me money, to purchase my child? unnatural man, who knew so little the soul of a father! no, since I lost you, I have never had a quiet moment, nor a quarter of an hour's sleep; during the day time, the earth which I cultivated was bedewed with my tears, the night, while you was plunged in guilty pleasures, beheld thy father, stretched on his bed, tearing his grey locks, and calling for thee in vain: alas! my groans never reached thy heart, or troubled thy repose."

"Heaven is my witness," replied Lauretta, "had I imagined that my flight caused you so much uneasiness, I would have left every thing to have flown to your arms. I revere, I love you, more than ever. What a father have I grieved! In the very instant that I expected to find you an inexorable judge, I hear nothing but reproaches, mixed with tenderness; ah my father when I fell at your feet, I was overwhelmed with shame and terror, but at present I am affected by tenderness only, and mix tears of joy with those of repentance." "I have found my daughter again," says Basil, helping her up: "your daughter," replied Lauretta, "is no longer worthy of you." — Do not discourage yourself, honour

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is to be sure a great blessing, innocence a greater still; and if I could have had my choice, I had rather have seen thee dead. But though innocence and honour are lost, there still remains an inestimable blessing; virtue, which never perishes: there is required only to be willing to be so, to make it spring up again in the soul; and, when it is thought to be entirely extinguished, remorse produces it again. Let this comfort you, my daughter, for the loss of your innocence; and if your repentance is sincere, Heaven and thy father are appeased. Nobody in the village is acquainted with your misfortune; you may repair to it without shame." ——— Where, father? ———

"At Coulange, where I propose to take you." These words overwhelmed Lauretta." "Haste, continued Basil, "to throw off these ornaments of vice; leave these poisonous presents to the wretch who has seduced thee, and follow me without further delay."

A person must have a soul tender as Lauretta, to love, like her, a father and a lover at the same time; to conceive, to feel the combat in her soul, betwixt love and nature. Her astonishment made her dumb. "Let us go," said her father, "time is precious." "Pardon me," replies Lauretta, falling at his feet, pardon me, father, and be not offended at my delaying to obey you: Luzy wants, indeed, the name of an husband but he has all those rights over me which the most tender love can give. I will leave him and go with you; I am resolved; but to run away from him in his absence, to give him room to think I am false." "What sayest thou, unhappy girl, is the opinion of a vile seducer of any consequence? And what right can he claim over you, whose love has ruined and dishonoured you? You love him! you love your shame; you prefer his scandalous presents to the innocence he has robbed you

you of; you prefer to your father your most implacable enemy. You dare not leave him in his absence, and without his consent: Alas! when you were to quit your father, to overwhelm him with grief, and almost drive him to distraction, you were not so timid. And what do you expect from your ravisher? that he should defend you, and ravish you from paternal authority. Let him come; let him dare to drive me hence: I am a lone man, unarmed, and enfeebled by age, but he shall see me stretched out on the threshold of his door, demanding vengeance of God and man; thy lover himself, to get at thee, shall be obliged to trample over my body, and passengers cry out with horror, behold her father, whom she disavows, and her lover tramples under his feet."

"Alas, father!" replied Lauretta, how little do you know the person you revile so cruelly. No one can possess a sweeter temper, or a greater share of sensibility: he respects and reveres you." "How dare you mention his respect, who has dishonoured me? Do you hope he will be able to seduce me to? I will not see him."——Not see him! but permit me to see him, though but for a moment."——

"What do you ask? to leave you alone with him? No, Heaven has placed you once more under my care, and from henceforth I am answerable for your actions. Come, daughter, it is almost dark; determine, either to renounce or obey thy father."

"—— You pierce my heart."—— "Obey, I say, or expect a father's curse." At these terrible words Lauretta trembled, and had no power to reply: she undressed herself before her father, not without shedding tears. "Father," says she, at the very moment they were departing, "May I venture to ask one favour as the price of my obedience? You would not desire the death of him I sacrifice to you; suffer me
only

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only to write a line, to acquaint him that it is you whom I obey, and who obliges me to leave him."--

"What, that he may come once more to take you away? No, I will not leave the least trace of you; should he die of shame, it would be just; but of love, never fear, libertines never die of love." Then, taking his daughter in his hand, he departed silently, and the next morning embarked on board a vessel to return to his own country.

They were scarce gone before Luzy returned, and found every thing in confusion. The servants acquainted him they were ignorant of what was become of Lauretta; that they had searched for her in vain; that she had sent them out, laid hold of that opportunity to escape their vigilance, and had left behind her every thing, not excepting even her jewels. But while Luzy was almost besides himself, and spared no expence, nor left any means untried to get intelligence of Lauretta, she was with her father, deploring her fault, or, rather, the loss of her lover.

Bazil had given it out, that he could not do without his daughter, and that he had been to fetch her back. She was much improved, and, even in the eyes of the peasants, the Paris air had given her new charms. The ardour of the young men who had courted her before, now encreased; but her father refused every offer. "You shall never marry while I live," says he. "I will not deceive any one; work with me, and bewail your crime. I have just sent back to your unworthy betrayer every thing he gave me: we have now nothing left us from him but shame."

Lauretta, humble and submissive, obeyed her father without repining. It was an incredible difficulty to her to return to indigence and hard labour: her feet were blistered; her delicate hands bruised; but these

these were slight misfortunes: "The pains of the body," says she, sighing, are nothing, compared with those of the mind."

Though Luzy was perpetually in her thoughts, and she could not wean herself from him, yet she had neither hopes or a desire to return to him: she knew what affliction her connexion with him had occasioned her father, and had she been now at liberty to quit him, she would not have consented to it. Yet the recollection of the uneasiness her flight had caused Luzy, continually haunted her, and became part of her punishment, as well as the right he had to accuse her of perfidy and ingratitude. — "If I could but write to him," says she; "but, alas, I have neither the power, or the means. My father thinks it too little to quit him; he would have me forget him too: I could sooner forget myself; and it is as impossible for me to hate as to forget him. If he was culpable, love was the cause; and surely it is not my place to punish him for that. It is true, he is mistaken; he has led me into an error; but at his time of life, love alone possesses our minds. Yes, I owe to him, I owe myself an eclaireissement of my conduct; and in this alone shall my father be disobeyed." The difficulty was only to procure the means of writing to him; but her father, without thinking of it, spared her this trouble.

One evening, Luzy, still as much afflicted as ever, received an anonymous letter in an unknown hand. He opened it hastily, and immediately recollected the purse which he had made a present of to Basil, containing the fifty guineas he had given him at first, as well as his subsequent present. "I now see the whole," says he, "I have been discovered; her father returns my presents. Proud and severe, as I know he is, the moment he knew where his daughter was,

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was, he came to fetch her away, and forced her to go with him." He instantly called Lauretta's servants; he enquired if none of them had seen with her a countryman, answering the description he gave them. One of them recollected, that the day she was missing, a person answering the description had got on the boot of her chariot, and spoke to her. "It is enough," replied Luzy, "put the horses to the post-chaise directly."

The night following, being arrived within a few miles of Coulange, he disguised one of his retinue like a peasant, and sent him to get intelligence, while he endeavoured to repose himself; but it was impossible for a lover to obtain any in such a situation; he reckoned the minutes, from the departure to the return of his emissary. At length the servant returned, and brought news that Lauretta was at Coulange with her father, and that there was a talk of her being married soon. "Married!" replied Luzy, "I must see her." — "You will find her, Sir," says the servant, "in the vineyard; she works there every day." — "Good Heaven!" replied Luzy, "what an hardship! go I will hide myself, and do you, under your disguise, watch her being alone; do not lose a moment; let us set out immediately."

Luzy's emissary told the truth; a rich peasant had offered to pay his addresses to Lauretta, and the curate had insisted on Basil's resolving to accept of him. In the mean while, Lauretta worked in the vineyard every day, but Luzy was still uppermost in her thoughts. At length Luzy arrived; he perceived her at a distance, but advanced cautiously, till he was convinced she was alone; he then ran towards her, and threw himself at her feet. At the noise the leaves of the vines made, she looked up, and seeing him, exclaimed, "My God!"

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Surprize and joy deprived her of speech : trembling, she at length was able to say, "Luzy! is it you! it was all I asked of Heaven; I am innocent in your eyes; it is enough; the rest I can suffer with patience. Adieu, Luzy; adieu, for ever: leave me and bewail Lauretta; she does not reproach you; but will hold you dear to her last breath." "I!" exclaimed he, pressing her to his bosom as if any one had attempted to force her from him, "I quit you, my better half! I live without you! No; no power on earth shall ever divide us more." "There is a power sacred to me," replied Lauretta, "my father's pleasure; my dear Luzy, had you but known the profound grief my elopement plunged him in, good and tender hearted as you are, you would have restored me to his tears. To steal me from him a second time, or to plunge a dagger in his breast, would be alike to me; you know me too well to ask this of me; you are too humane yourself, even to desire it: adieu, Heaven grant I may expiate my fault, though I can scarcely reproach myself with it. Adieu, I say, my father is coming; he will be terrified to see us together." "It is what I wish." Says Luzy, "I will wait for him."—"Alas, you redouble my pains," replied Lauretta.

At this instant Basil arrived, and Luzy, advancing some steps before him, threw himself at his feet. "Who are you? What do you want?" says Basil directly, astonished; but when he had looked at him steadfastly, "Wretch," says he, "get out of my sight." "No," replied Luzy, "I will die at your feet if you refuse to hear me."—"After having ruined and dishonoured my daughter, how dare you look her father in the face?"—"I am criminal, I acknowledge; but if you will but hear me, I flatter myself you will pity me." "Alas," replied Basil, fixing

fixing his eyes on his sword, "if I was as base and as cruel as you!"—— "See," turning to his daughter, says he, "how despicable and how shameful vice is; since it makes a man creep at the feet of his equal, and bear his insults." "If I was vicious only," answered Luzy with fierceness, "instead of asking your forgiveness, I should have braved you. Attribute my humiliation to love alone, to virtue itself, the most noble and honourable passion in nature; to a desire to expiate a fault, excuseable, perhaps, and which I should not reproach myself for so cruelly, had I not a good heart." Then, with all the eloquence of sentiment, he endeavoured to justify himself, attributing the whole to the fire of youth, infatuation and excess of passion.

Bazil replied, "It is happy for mankind, that avarice was not your prevailing passion; had it been so, you would have been an highwayman; yes, an highwayman, why not? You have been base enough to imagine, that innocence and honour are of less value than riches and life. Have you not made use of the weakness of this unhappy girl to rob her of both these treasures? And do you think you have done me, her unhappy father, a less injury, than if you had assassinated me? A thief is hanged who steals a person's goods only; what, then, do you deserve, who have robbed us of what a girl of family, or a father who is a gentleman, cannot loose, without loss of life? You call yourself a nobleman, and think you are so; behold the nobility of which you boast: in a time of distress, in which the most wicked of mankind would have pittied me, you pretended to be sorry for my misfortunes, yet thought thus: 'Behold an unhappy wretch, who has no comfort left in this world but his daughter; she is the only blessing Heaven has left him, her, will I to-morrow deprive him

him of.' " Yes, barbarian, these were your thoughts, and I, credulous fool, admired your goodness, heaped blessings on you, and begged of Heaven to grant you all your wishes; and at the same time all your desire was to debauch my child. What do I say, wretch that I am! I delivered her up to you, I made her run after you, though in fact only to return you this gold, this poison, with which you endeavoured to corrupt me. It seems as if Heaven meant to warn me that it was a traiterous present; I resisted this impulse, and obstinately persisted to believe you compassionate and generous, who are perfidious and pitiless; and I bathed that hand with my tears, which was preparing to wound my heart. See (discovering his breast and shewing the scars) what a man you have dishonoured! I have shed, for the service of my country, more blood than you have in your veins: and you, useless man, what have been your exploits? To drive a father to distraction, by debauching his child, and embittering the remainder of their lives. Behold this unhappy girl, the victim of your artifice, brought up in innocence, and used to a laborious life; she submitted to her duty with pleasure, but she now detests it; you have rendered poverty and labour insupportable to her; she has lost her spirits with her innocence, nor can she any more look up without blushing. But what most distracts me, and which I never can forgive you, is, that you hardened the heart of my child against her father; you have extinguished the sentiments of nature in her soul; you have made the company of her father a punishment to her; perhaps, alas!— I dare not go on. — Perhaps, I am even hateful to her sight."

" Ah father," cries Lauretta, who till now had remained silent and abashed through shame and confusion, " you upbraid me too severely; I deserve
all

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all, except the reproach that I have ceased loving you." Saying these words, she threw herself at his feet; Luzy also knelt, and, in an excess of tenderness, exclaimed, "Pardon me, father, pardon me! embrace your children! and if the ravisher of Lauretta is not too unworthy to be her husband, I conjure you to grant me your consent."

This repentance would have melted an harder heart than Basil's; who replied, "If there was any other way of restoring me my honour, or both of ye your innocence, I would refuse you: but it is the only way; I accept it more for your sakes than my own; for I solemnly declare, I expect nothing from you, but will end my days in cultivating my vineyard."

The marriage of Luzy and Lauretta was accordingly solemnized at the altar. The world thought he had done a dishonourable action, and he agreed to it: "But it is not that," said he, "which they attribute to me; dishonour consists in doing a bad action, not in repairing the injury."

It was impossible to persuade Basil to alter his resolution, and quit his cottage; Madame Luzy, therefore, prevailed on her husband to purchase an estate at Coulange; where the good old man consented, at last, to pass the remainder of his days.

Two hearts formed for virtue were charmed to have regained its paths. The image of celestial pleasures, the concord of love and innocence, left them nothing further to desire, than to see the fruits of so sweet an union: Heaven at length heard the voice of nature, and Basil, before his death, embraced his grand children.

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